



**Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access,  
Transitions and Equity**

# **Access to Basic Education in Ghana: The Evidence and the Issues**

## **Country Analytic Report**

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**June 2007**



**Centre for International Education  
University of Sussex**





Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access, Transitions & Equity  
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The Consortium for Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) is a Research Programme Consortium supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Its purpose is to undertake research designed to improve access to basic education in developing countries. It seeks to achieve this through generating new knowledge and encouraging its application through effective communication and dissemination to national and international development agencies, national governments, education and development professionals, non-government organisations and other interested stakeholders.

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## List of Acronyms

AAG	Action Aid Ghana
ADPE	Accelerated Development Plan for Education
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examinations
BESIPs	Basic Education Sector Improvement Plans
CAR	Country Analytic Review
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transition and Equity
CRT	Criterion Reference Testing
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicating Questionnaire
EdSAC	Education Sector Adjustment Credit
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education, Management Information System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
ESSP	Education Sector Support Programme
ESR	Education Sector Review
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GDHS	Ghana Demographic and Health survey
GHDR	Ghana Human Development Report
GES	Ghana Education Service`
GLSS	Ghana Living Standards Survey
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GNCC	Ghana National Commission on Children
GOG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Scheme
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PMT	Performance Monitoring Tests

PSDP	Primary School Development Project
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SEN	Special Education Needs
SIF	School Improvement Fund
SMC	School Management Committee
SPAM	School Performance Appraisal Meeting
SPIPs	School Performance Improvement Plans
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TED	Teacher Education Division
TTC	Teacher Training Colleges
REV	Rural Education Volunteer
UNICEF	United Nation International Scientific Education Fund
UNESCO	United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WSD	Whole School Development
WVI	World Vision International



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## Preface

This review of educational development in Ghana has been developed to explore key issues in access to education, capture recent research, and to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding. It is part of a programme of research developed collaboratively by partners in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the UK within the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE). The research has several purposes and seeks to identify children who are excluded from basic education, establish the causes of their exclusion, and identify ways of ensuring that all children complete a full cycle of basic education successfully.

CREATE conceives of access to basic education in four zones of exclusion – children who never attend, children who enroll in primary school but drop out before completion, children in school but attending irregularly and learning little, and children who fail to transit to lower secondary school. There are problems in all these zones in Ghana despite the progress that has been made over the last decade within the framework of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals.

The analysis builds on insights from the recent Ministry of Education Sector Performance Report and the World Bank commissioned report on Books, Buildings and Learning Outcomes. It notes that though access has improved it remains the case that access remains uneven and has not grown as fast as is needed to reach universal levels of participation through primary school and into JSS by 2015. More needs to be understood about the reasons for stalled growth. Repetition and drop out remain substantial between grades 1 and 2, and rise again in the upper grades of primary. Overage entry appears stubbornly resistant to attempts to enroll all children, especially girls, at the age of six. Regional variations in access and participation are such that as many as 40% of school age children appear not to be enrolled in some parts of the country, especially in the North. And levels of achievement are such that further expansion risks increasing the numbers who learn little of what is required to successfully complete basic education at levels that assure sustained literacy and numeracy.

The challenge this report offers is to develop a research agenda to inform policy and practice in ways that will make a difference over the next ten years. This highlights several key dimensions which will be explored through fieldwork, secondary data analysis, and policy dialogue. The agenda includes needs to:

- Illuminate why the growth in enrolment rates has fallen below expectation and explore whether demand as well as supply side constraints are an important part of the explanation
- Deepen understanding at the community and school level of the characteristics of entry and progression that result in peaks in drop out and repetition in early and later grades which do not seem to be changing very rapidly and which may affect girls and boys differently
- Establish the extent to which the introduction of capitation and other changes in school financing are having an impact on improved access and whether these will be sufficient to sustain recent gains in enrolment

- Revisit regional and local strategies to improve access and transition to JSS which recognise different contextual constraints in the North, Middle Belt, and the South, and within different communities including migrants and those economically disadvantaged
- Detail the effects of over age enrolment, especially on girls, and identify more rather than less effective policy and practice that results in learning achievement closer to national norms

This is an ambitious agenda and one that it is very important to pursue through to new strategies for investment. The Team is to be congratulated on a comprehensive review that suggests some new priorities and prepares the ground for empirical studies. The research offers the prospect of genuinely new insights that can improve the lives of those children whose basic right to education is yet to be fully realised.

Professor Keith Lewin  
Director of CREATE

## **Executive Summary**

This report synthesizes analysis of evidence on access to Basic Education in Ghana and uses this as a basis for outlining areas that need further research. Written as a critical analytic review it provides a background of shared knowledge, understandings and research evidence about access to basic education in Ghana. The review starts by assessing the impact past and present policies on basic education have made on expanding access and conclude with a number of recommendations for further research on access as well as issues for policy reformulation.

The report:

- Investigates the evolution of access to basic education in Ghana. This assesses the implications of primary enrolment trends over an extended period of time.
- Analyzes basic education policies and practices for insight into the effect they have had on access to basic education.
- Examines the conditions and factors that underpin access as both a process and outcome from which it develops preliminary understandings of the nature of exclusion from meaningful access.
- Reviews recent empirical and secondary analysis studies on access to basic education and maps out what the key challenges are to expanding access, particularly for poor and marginalized groups in society.
- Provides preliminary policy recommendations and identifies specific issues, themes, and agendas for further research in Ghana.

This Country Analytic Review (CAR) benefited from inputs from education officials and academic researchers in Ghana.

### **On the influence of basic education policies on access**

The current basic education structure and curriculum has its roots in Ghana's colonial past. Pre-independence education was characterized by attempts to create incentives for all children to attend school, as happened in Northern Ghana with the introduction of free education to improve access. The earliest sign of a plan to universalize primary education was in 1945 when the colonial government proposed a 10-year plan to universalize primary education in 25 years based on cost projections set within affordable limits.

The next significant basic education expansion initiative was the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) for Education. This plan also aimed to achieve universal primary education (UPE) for all by abolishing tuition fees, although households were to be responsible for the cost of stationary, textbooks etc. After independence, the introduction of the 1961 Education Act continued the commitment to free basic education. All of these policies helped to expand access rapidly but they were generally not very successful in sustaining high enrolment and completion to universalize access for all children.

A further wave of education reforms took place in 1987 and 1995. Both reforms benefited from substantial investments, mainly from external donors and generally helped to improve access significantly. But these later reforms also faced similar challenges as

previous reforms had; how to sustain early gains in enrolment and universalize basic education for all. Recent analysis of enrolment trends show that initial gains are reverting to predictable decline below universal levels. The evidence suggests the need for a mix of policies targeted at specific areas and a host of initiatives that can increase demand for basic education, especially in rural areas. The recent introduction of the capitation grants scheme is one such initiative that is clearly making an impact, but further research is required to understand its potential to sustain the surge in enrolments and improve completion rates.

An optional two-year nursery schooling for children aged 4 and 5 became part of the mainstream education system in 2002. This has extended basic education from 9 years to 11 years (GOG, 2004). Extending basic education to 11 years has huge financial and capacity implications. However, problems of access extend beyond financial constraints and considerations to include the non-financial constraints such as teacher supply, classrooms etc.

Clearly, ensuring that children start school early is one of the important issues emerging from the analysis of access data. But accessing schooling at the grade appropriate age does not guarantee that children will complete the full cycle of basic education as additional evidence suggests. Required educational inputs and facilities (non financial constraints) need to be present to mutually reinforce the effects.

One of the key lessons from previous education reforms is that rapid expansion must go in tandem with measures to ensure quality provision of education if initial gains are not to be reversed. Ensuring adequate teacher supply and improved school infrastructure facilities are important to this endeavour.

## **On trends and patterns of access to basic education**

### **Overall picture on enrolment**

Analysis of the 2003 Ghana Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) provided some insights into enrolment patterns. An estimate of enrolment in school for children aged 6-16 years, irrespective of grade, revealed that children between the ages of 8-13 (14 for boys) are most likely to be in enrolled in school, and among children aged 6 to 8 enrolment rates increased rapidly but declined for 13 year olds, and children aged 14-16 years. But amongst girls aged 6-10 years the enrolment rate is not significantly different to that of boys. However, the gap widens for children aged 11-16 years, with girls lower by almost 8 percent than boys. The suggestion is that girls enrolling later than the official entry age are also more likely to drop out, especially as they approach adolescence. Because of late entry into schooling, Ghana's primary school population has a mean age of 7.5 years in primary 1 and a mean age of 13.3 years in primary 6. The junior secondary population has a mean age of 14.3 years in year 1 and mean age of 16.2 years in year three. At the JSS level girls attendance rates are higher than boys especially in urban areas.

Rural children are significantly less likely than urban children to be enrolled in school, irrespective of the age-group. The existence and widening of the rural-urban gap in JSS may be explained by the relatively late age entry into primary school of rural children. Net junior secondary school enrolment rates amongst rural children are also significantly

lower compared to the urban rate because of the significantly larger proportion of rural children who have never attended school.

An investigation into enrolment rates by welfare quintile also reveals that amongst children from the lowest welfare quintile the junior secondary enrolment rate amongst girls is lower than that of boys. However, amongst children in the fourth and fifth welfare quintiles the reverse is the case. Indeed, children from households in the lowest welfare quintile have significantly lower net primary and junior secondary enrolment and attendance rates compared to children living in households with higher welfare measures. Children from households in the lower welfare quintile are likely to enter primary school at an older age compared to those from households in higher wealth quintiles. They are also more likely to drop out of school whilst children from the wealthiest households are twice as likely to be in school as children from the poorest households. At JSS they are more than three times as likely. Household poverty seems to be an important predictor of access and participation in basic education.

### **Age to Grade Enrolments**

The official age for entry into primary schooling in Ghana is six years. However, only about a third of the primary 1 population in 2003 was aged 5-6 years old. The estimated mean age of 7.5 years included late entries, older-age entries, and repeaters. A slightly higher proportion of girls in primary 1 are 5 or 6 years old compared to the proportion of boys. However, the population of girls in primary 1 aged 5 to 8 is the same as that of boys. Children in primary 1 in rural schools were on average older than those in urban schools. The population of children from households in the lowest welfare quintile in primary 1 had an older age structure compared to the children from the highest welfare quintile. Whereas nearly 50 percent of children from the lowest welfare quintile in primary 1 were aged 5-7 years, this rises to about 69 percent for children in the highest welfare quintile. Children from more affluent households are likely to start school earlier. But, even among this group there is still a significant minority, about a third, who are starting school above the official entry age.

### **Gross Enrolment by Grade**

Analysis of GERS by grade reveals a constant decline in GER by grade. In effect, as children progress through school their numbers decrease almost at a constant rate. Although in absolute terms many more children are completing primary school the proportion of cohorts which start grade 1 has not changed very much over the years. The overall indication is that children are beginning school at a late age, repeating grades, or dropping in and out of the school system. Thus, the real problem is not about getting more children officially enrolled (the evidence suggests that more are enrolling), but rather, it is about reducing early drop out or overage enrolments. Some evidence suggests that children are dropping out or attending infrequently because they feel the returns are low. Research conducted in a rural area of Ghana revealed that 'most children do not follow schoolwork because they do not possess the understanding from previous work that is a prerequisite for the syllabus of the higher grades of primary school and junior secondary school' (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003:25). Tackling the school quality and efficiency problem is undoubtedly one important way of ensuring that high enrolments stay up all the basic education cycle.

## **Promotion, Repetition and Drop Out by Grade**

Recent EMIS data shows that across all public primary grades the average rate of promotion, repetition and dropout rates vary considerably by grade. Grade 1 has the highest repetition and dropout rates, and the lowest promotion rates. Grades 2 to 5 show patterns of repetition ranging between 4 percent and 6 percent respectively each year, with an overall downward trend. Dropout is greatest in grade one, but peaks again in P4 and to a lesser extent P5. Promotion rates in P4 are also slightly down on the other grades. Grade 6 has the highest promotion and lowest drop out rates, which may be due to the prospect of completing primary and entering JSS. Repetition is relatively high in Northern Ghana, particularly in Upper East and Upper West regions and among girls.

## **Out of School**

Determining the out of school population is dependent on which methods are used in the calculation. Errors can either overstate or underestimate participation in school. Administrative data provided by EMIS suggests that there are about 1,500,000 children who are out of school. This seems rather high and inconsistent with other indicative analysis of enrolment trends of the 6 to 11 year olds based on household survey data. Errors in the population estimates or projection data may explain this rather high figure which perhaps has not taken into account those who have never enrolled and those who enrolled but dropped out. Until there is accurate population estimates, the out of school populations will remain difficult to pin down.

## **Transition to secondary**

Generally, the majority of children in Ghana who reach primary 6 continue to JSS. For those who enter junior secondary most are able to complete. The story is a little different when it comes to entry into senior secondary. Here there is a significant drop. Less than 50 percent are able to make the transition into senior secondary. Analysis of participation by household income and rural/urban clearly indicates that children from poor households are less likely to continue their education to the secondary level (to JSS and SSS). Participation also depends on location (urban or rural dweller). Richer households are substantially more likely to access JSS (and subsequently SSS). Thus, demand for basic education may be much less for low income families living in rural areas who may be less inclined to invest personal energy and resources into enrolling their children and ensuring that they stay on to complete.

## **Summary**

The following questions are pertinent to the problem of access to basic education in Ghana:

- What factors, especially among poor population groups determines which children enroll, attend regularly, complete basic education, and make a successful transition to senior secondary?
- Why have patterns of access, participation and completion improved so slowly? Why does repetition in grade continue to be high compared to the other grades?
- Why is there, it would seem, such a high proportion of school-age children out of school, and why is attracting these children proved to be consistently difficult?

Providing answers to these questions will require investigations at the school-community level where pathways and processes of access and participation in basic schools can be studied more intensively.

## **On the zones of exclusion to access**

An indicator of trends in participation in education is the proportion of the population classified by age-group that has ever attended school. This is a crude measure of participation because it includes those who entered but did not complete basic education and does not provide any information on the current level of education attained for those still in school. Using this measure it is observed that there has been an increase in the proportion of the population that has participated in education in Ghana in the last fifty years. But, the urban-rural gap still persists, although there has been some narrowing of the gap in the last two decades. People in urban areas are more likely to attend or to have attended school, although other analysis suggests that this differential gap is closing (see World Bank, 2004).

### **Zone 1: Children who have never attended school**

Approximately 15 percent of the population of Ghana aged 6-14 years and 17 percent of the population aged 15 to 24 years had never attended school according to figures taken in 2003. The difference between boys and girls is not significant for the 6-14 year age group, but widens to 7 percentage points for the 15-24 year age group.

There is a significant urban-rural gap for age groups. Only 6 percent of urban children in the 6-14 age/group had never attended school by 2003 compared to 20 percent of rural children. Location also interacts with gender. Girls in rural households are more likely to have never attended school than girls in urban areas.

The proportion of the population that has never attended school amongst the age-group 6-14 years ranges from a mean of 5 percent in the Greater Accra region to a mean of 43 percent in the Northern Region. Amongst the population aged 15-24 years the mean ranges from 5 percent in the Greater Accra Region to 54 percent in the Northern Region. Thus location is important in trying to understand why some children never enroll. The North, for example, suffers higher economic and social deprivation compared to the South.

### **Zone 2: Children who drop out of school**

EMIS data estimates a primary school population survival rate of about 83 percent for the years 2004/2005. Overall, drop outs appear to be quite low, but this may be due to the fact that the CWIQ is survey and not census based. More rural children drop out of school than children in urban areas. Also the incidence of dropping out is higher amongst girls than it is amongst boys. The probability that children drop out of school increases with age, with the increase higher for girls than boys.

The effect of welfare on the drop out rate is not the same across the different age cohorts. Amongst children aged 6-11 years a positive relationship pertains between dropping out and welfare indicators. A similar pattern holds for the 12-14 year age group. However,



for children aged 15-17 years, it would appear that the relationship is reversed, i.e. children from high welfare quintiles are more likely to drop out from school. This situation might be explained by the fact that more children from this quintile are actually still in school at this stage than other socio-economic groups, leading to the possibility of higher drop out rates.

Estimates from the 2003 CWIQ data suggest that more than a third of children aged 6-11 years who dropped out did so after completing primary 1. Grade 4 is the next grade at which primary children are likely to drop out, with the risk higher for girls than boys. Fewer than 2 percent of drop outs aged 6-11 had completed primary 6. Amongst children aged 12-14 years who had dropped out, fewer than half had completed primary 4. Approximately 13 percent of drop outs in this age group completed JSS3 before dropping out. Amongst drop outs aged 15-17 years, about 52 percent had ended their education at the end of JSS3. These figures are suggestive of high repetition rates between grades and/or late enrolments. A number of factors are thought to explain drop out before the end of the basic education cycle. These include the age at which a child starts school (with overage entries thought more likely to drop out as pressure to enter adult life and the workplace is increasing); low attainment; high absence; and high repetition rates.

### **Zone 3: Children at risk of dropping out**

A number of interlocking in-school factors are thought to increase a child's likelihood of dropping out and as such make children at risk of leaving school before completing a cycle of basic education. These include: low attendance, low attainment, and grade repetition. These factors interact with other socio-economic, household and context-specific features which also influence whether a child remains in school.

There is no national data on the frequency of school attendance in Ghana. However, case studies suggest the phenomena of interrupted school attendance may be widespread. One particular case study found that most children had temporarily withdrawn from school more than once over a twelve month period.

### **Zone 4: Children who complete primary but not junior secondary school**

Transition from primary to JSS is less problematic than that between JSS to SSS. Of the sub-population aged 12-14 years about 30 percent of children who had completed primary school managed to continue to junior secondary. Of children aged 15-17 years, there is a significant increase in the proportion that complete primary school but do not continue to junior secondary. As a result of late entry most of the population aged 12-14 years still find themselves in primary school. This can partly explain the extremely low proportion of children aged 12-14 years in Northern Ghana who do not continue their education after completing primary 6.

### **Summary**

The 2003 CWIQ data and other enrolment analysis reveals that basic education in Ghana is not available to quite a significant proportion of the population aged 6-17 years who have never attended school, enrolled late, or had attended irregularly, probably as many as 15 percent. There is also a relatively high drop out rate amongst the population group aged 15-17 years.

## **On evidence from access related research in Ghana**

This section covers a range of topics linked to educational access: health; disability; HIV/AIDS; households; migration; child labour; educational costs; gender and access; educational inputs e.g. teachers; non state providers and schooling practices

### **Health, nutrition and access to schooling**

One important piece of evidence from research in Ghana is that malnutrition, stunted growth are correlated with delayed enrolment in school. Health factors are important determinants of when a child goes to school. Differences exist in the health status of enrolled and non-enrolled children, with out-of-school children often more vulnerable to health problems. Studies also indicate that health status has implications for attendance, retention and drop out, with hunger, malaria, headaches and poor eyesight noted as major causes of absenteeism and dropping out (Fentiman, et al., 1999, 2001).

Health issues have also been found to be gendered, with girls reporting more health-related problems than boys. Painful menstruation, a lack of sanitary facilities and pregnancy has been found to lead to both absenteeism and drop-out of adolescent girls (Fentiman et al., 1999, 2001). Other research has noted that interventions targeted at infants and first years of primary schooling helps to improve enrolment to quite a significant extent (see Fentiman et al., 2001). Similarly gender-sensitive programmes that focus on female adolescent health and specific strategies to reach out to those most at risk have potential to improve access and retention.

Not much research has examined the impact that food aid and school feeding programmes have on educational access (Pridmore, 2007), but in Ghana one study investigated the impact of food aid intervention on girls' enrolment, attendance and retention in schools in the East Gonja District of Northern Ghana. Generally, it found that although food aid is an incentive for girls to enrol, attend and remain in school till completion, creating more awareness of the importance and benefits of girls' education was equally important in improving girls' participation in basic education (Seidu, 2003).

### **Disability, special educational needs and access**

It is estimated that around 5 percent of the population of Ghana have some sort of disability with sight problems noted as most prevalent (around 59 percent), then hearing/speaking. But, there is the possibility of under-recording of disability in rural areas which would make disability a sometimes less-visible factor in educational access.

There are indications that access to education for many with disabilities in Ghana is an urban phenomenon although this could also be a result of under-reporting in rural areas. For example, a study in Accra and some rural areas in Eastern region revealed that majority of students with disabilities had not had their disabilities detected or identified by professionals (Obeng 2007). In a survey which involved 66 teachers/head teachers (plus 16 parents), 87 percent of teachers and head teachers were not aware of any existing policy for special education needs (SEN), and therefore had no arrangements in place for implementation of such policy in their schools (Asamani, 2000). Many teachers are often unwilling to have children with disabilities in their class, especially those with behaviour problems (Obeng 2007). Generally, there seem to be a lack of detailed analytical research

into the scale of disability and SEN in Ghanaian schools and its relationships with educational access.

### **HIV/AIDS and educational access**

There is limited research on children, HIV/AIDS and educational access in Ghana. In comparison to some other Sub-Sahara African countries, Ghana is not seen as one of the high prevalence countries. It appears that in the coming years the percentage of orphans in Ghana is likely to remain largely unchanged (Bennell et al., 2002). There are a number of potential impacts on educational access if teachers become infected with the HIV/AIDS virus. For example, infected teachers might experience long and frequent absences from school, low productivity, financial hardships and non-completion of curricula. There are claims that the prevalence rate for Ghanaian teachers is higher than the national average (Tamukong, 2004). Further research is required to draw firmer conclusions on the impact of HIV/AIDS on educational access.

### **Household influence access**

Research in Northern Ghana has suggested that the likelihood of children's enrolment is based on a complex mix of factors which include the educational level of parents, particularly mothers, the ability to pay indirect/direct costs of schooling, and the types of livelihoods households pursue. In some cases the likelihood of a child's enrolment 'was an outcome of the different ways in which households were organised, the manner in which household members' time was occupied and the types of assets they invested in, including human capital' (Hashim, 2005:17). Other studies confirm the benefits of parental education to schooling access for children (Mensah, 1992, Lloyd and Blanc, 1996 cited in CARE International, 2003; Johnson and Kyle, 2001; Montgomery, Kouamé, Oliver, 1995), leading to the conclusion that parental education, particularly the mother's education has a big influence on children's attendance and achievement.

Household decisions on who gets access and why often favours 'those who are most willing, able and determined' going to school, while other children stayed at home to ensure the availability of the necessary labour to secure livelihoods and assets' (Hashim, 2005). 'Parents frequently aspire to educate their children. However, education is sometimes seen as one among a range of means of securing children's long-term welfare. Consequently, the ability and desire to educate all their children can be tempered by a child's perceived interest and scholastic ability, by parents' assessment of education as a viable livelihood strategy, and by the need to secure and protect the household's immediate well-being, which might require a reduction in expenditure, such as those associated with educating a child, or a need for labour to ensure subsistence' (Hashim, 2005:17).

In rural communities where schools are a distance away, children might be fostered into another community where there is a school (Pillon, 2003). Interestingly, in rural areas the enrolment rate for children residing without their parents is higher than that of the household heads' own children, an indication that some children are fostered in order to attend school. Conversely, in urban areas, children living without their parents seem to have lower enrolment rates than the household heads' own offspring. In the urban areas under-enrolment seems to affect girls more than boys, which might suggest that, girls are

fostered in urban areas to provide domestic support to households rather than to access education.

### **Migration and educational access**

Migration is linked to issues of fostering and orphan-hood, but also includes the movement of household units. In villages specialising in out-migration, children frequently drop out of school before the completion of compulsory education to migrate to cities, although the earnings of these migrants might be used to pay for the education of a sibling. Increasing demand for educational access in the south seems to be a factor contributing to domestic labour requirements being filled by child migrants from the north. However there are examples of young people who rather than dropping out, migrate to acquire the funds to re-sit exams or further their education' (see Hashim, 2005). A study by Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy (1999:334) allude to the gendered aspects of child migration and the sense that girls seemed to be migrating more than boys with consequences on opportunities for access to schooling.

### **Gender and educational access**

Gendered schooling patterns are context-specific with research indicating differentiations across Ghana. Research suggests that while some general patterns might be found around gendered access, these might not be applicable across the board, and therefore the need to look at this issue from location-specific contexts is important.

Several studies have documented reasons why girls tend to have lower enrolment rates than boys, higher drop out and less transition to secondary. On the whole these reasons tend to be multifaceted and interrelated but with poverty as a common denominator (AED, 2002). Factors influencing female enrolments have been identified as: beliefs and practices and the perception of the role of girls by families and communities; costs; the opportunity cost of sending girls to school and girls having to travel long distances to go to school (see AED, 2002; Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Avotri, 2000). Using qualitative interviews with fifteen families in Accra and Koforidua (as well as observations), Yeboah (1997) found that there was some favouring of boys over girls, but also that gender only became an issue to families when they were obligated to make a decision about either a daughter's or a son's access to school. She notes that culture, quality of school, performance of a child, gender, sex role stereotyping, and perceptions of which child will most likely look after a parent were critical variables in family decision-making around girls' education.

### **Location and educational access**

Studies in Ghana have shown that access issues tend to be more pronounced in areas that are prone to a range of interlocking socio-economic factors. For example, high levels of illiteracy, low levels of human resource development, low levels of economic development, low levels of democratic participation, high levels of infant and child mortality and morbidity, and low levels of general family health, among others (see Ministry of Education, 2002a). Most of these areas are more likely to be found in the northern Ghana. Hashim (2005) found that the issue of access in the North was not static but evolved with perceptions and expectations of childhood playing a role in how demand for education is constructed by households. Education was not implicated in

‘normal’ childhood in the same way, and the inability to attend school was not perceived as an opportunity denied. Transformations were occurring in the meaning of education as a result of the changes in the lived experiences of individuals ... in particular due to the manner in which the labour market has changed and the increasing importance of the ‘modern’ sector economy. However, education was not fully implicated in the construction of childhood but rather viewed as a new form of recruitment to work, representing the possibility of alternative livelihoods’ (Hashim, 2005:18).

### **Schooling costs and access**

Several studies conducted in the 1990s and early 2000 suggested that a major obstacle to educational access was economic. The high cost of schooling pushes children into the labour market to enable them to afford school or pulls them away from school as they cannot afford it (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997). With the recent introduction of the capitation grant scheme into basic education, theoretically the issue of costs as a barrier should be eliminated or reduced to its barest minimum. Future CREATE studies in Ghana will test this assumption and explore the complexities surrounding household decision-making, in relation to access.

### **Child labour and access**

Depending on the nature of the work (and the type of educational opportunities available), child labour can: increase pressure to or cause drop outs from schooling; or provide financial support for the child’s schooling and/or that of siblings, many children both work and attend school. In terms of age as a child grows older, the opportunity cost of their time often increases (Glewwe & Jacoby, 1995 in Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999:340; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; Blunch & Verner, 2000). This can be seen for example in the migration habits of children, often from economically poorer communities who provide employment and domestic support (increasing quite significantly after the age of 13). Pressures on children to work might be seasonal in some contexts with implications for attendance at school. In one study, rural children were over twice as likely as urban children to engage in child labor. Girls were more likely than boys to be involved in child labour as were poor children. Finally involvement in child labour was found to be related to self-employment, family ownership of land and livestock, and the distances to the nearest primary and secondary school.

### **Non-state provision of basic education and access**

Private schooling in Ghana is mainly an urban phenomenon and run mainly on for profit basis. There has been some evidence which suggest that many ‘unrecognized’ private schools and schools managed by charitable organizations, operate in low income urban periphery areas. These schools are perceived to be providing better quality primary education (largely to poor households), than state providers (see Tooley, 2005). But their popularity could be attributed to the perception that they provide the mechanism for social mobility, and partly because of falling quality in public school education (LaRocque, 2001). Private schooling might also be plugging gaps in supply, with poor quality private and religious schools growing in number to accommodate students who cannot find access to state schools. Both the claims about the contribution of private

schooling to access particularly for poor households as well as the scale of such provision will be investigated in the CREATE work in Ghana.

## **Summary**

The research reviewed suggests that there is a range of interlocking supply and demand factors which influence access to schooling in Ghana. These work in context-specific ways, interacting with each other and external influences, to ensure that each access situation in Ghana is distinctive. However, it is possible to make some general observations about educational access from the research reviewed. Generally, children living in the rural north have less access than those in urban south; girls' in northern and rural areas have less access than those in the south or urban and peri-urban areas. Poverty explains why girls often leave school to migrate out of communities or remain within households, to work. Age and the labour market interact to influence access – children are more likely to be involved in child labour the older they are. Accessing school at an older age increases chances of dropout and pull towards the informal labour market, and is also influenced by a child's health in their early years. Generally, undernourished and stunted children are likely to start school late.

## **On new agendas for policy and research**

There are a number of issues that have emerged from this country analytic review of access to basic education that have implications for policy and further research. Significant issues with implications for policy dialogue and re-formulation concern the following:

- **Costs:** The introduction of capitation grants linked to fee-free provision provides the opportunity for children from poor households to access basic education. But other factors can compete to deny access. The cost barrier is important for policy to address, but is one of many other equally important factors that shape access to basic education. Issues about early child nutrition and health are critical to when a child starts and completes schooling. Overage enrolment is a fundamental problem that remains deeply rooted in basic education in Ghana, affecting attendance and completion. Policies on access must therefore be judged on the extent to which they tackle not only the supply side problems of access, but also the extent to which they interact with early childhood health and nutrition initiatives.
- **Social returns to investment into basic education** suggest that the problem of access should also not be construed simply as a choice facing parents, although this is equally critical. Because of the micro and macro social returns, community level participation in the enforcement of access policies, as well as in management, and delivery of education provision is a key to sustaining high enrolments right from grade 1. This also means that the setting of enrolment targets and support to achieving them must be bottom-up, where local education authorities, schools, communities and parents work together to provide access to quality basic education.
- A consistent policy agenda of basic education reform has been the attempt to make it 'free and compulsory'. However, as the analysis in this report has shown, indirect costs and other factors are equally important if free basic education is to mean equitable access for all. Indirect and opportunity costs of education are clearly

significant and therefore making basic education free of direct costs to parents, and compulsory, is only one half of the battle. Other strategies are needed to encourage demand. Besides, it is important to establish if basic education, even under the capitation scheme, is really free in terms of the indirect costs. CREATE studies in Ghana will provide some insights into this.

- What we know is that lack of access is concentrated mostly among poor rural areas, especially in Northern Ghana, as well as among densely populated urban poor. About 39 percent of the 138 districts in Ghana are classified as educationally deprived. This means areas with a high incidence of poverty and where access to good quality basic education is particularly problematic. There are also pockets of population groups for whom sending a child to school is a difficult choice because of the consequences this has on economic survival. There are others, including a few poor, who feel private schooling offers the best chance to post-basic education and a brighter future. Whatever challenges families face in deciding whether to send their child to school (state or private), the decision reflects investment choices as well as what they believe are the returns. Thus, access to basic education is not simply a supply issue, but is increasingly becoming an issue of demand, or at least a mixture of both supply and demand.
- Finally, policies intended to expand access and completion of basic education need to provide the kind of non-pecuniary incentives that are likely to make the prospect of basic education attractive. Quality of provision (i.e. teacher supply, school management, teaching and learning resources) and meaningful access (i.e. regular attendance, improved learning achievement), are key to the proposition that basic education is fundamental for personal and social development irrespective of the location and welfare status of all in society.

## **On key research areas and questions for Ghana**

Based on the insights that have been developed from this analytic review the following key research questions have been identified for future phases of CREATE work in Ghana:

### **Researching zone 1**

#### **1. Researching barriers to enrolment**

- What are the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Ghanaian children who never enrol in school? What is a good estimate of the size of this group?
- What conditions within the family or community acts as barriers to enrolment?
- What is the share of school-aged children in Ghana enrolled in alternative schools, special education schools, NGO non-profit schools etc.)?
- What routes exist for children in alternative basic schools to access public basic schools?
- What strategies have been used by alternative providers to enrol out of school children?
- To what extent can alternative schools provide sustainable access to basic education for children who unlikely to enrol in state basic schools?

### **Researching Zones 2, 3 & 4**

#### **2. Tracking attendance and participation**

- What factors shape patterns of enrolment, attendance, drop out and completion of primary and junior secondary school?
- What school level characteristics correlate with high or low attendance e.g. is there a relationship between teacher attendance, characteristics of school management, school/classroom size, health status of children, and pupil enrolment and attendance?
- What individual<sup>1</sup> and household characteristics<sup>2</sup> correlate with high or low enrolment, attendance and progression in primary and JSS education?
- What factors account for lack of access to JSS after successful completion of primary?
- Does attendance at pre -school (kindergarten) improve attendance and completion of primary schooling?
- At what age and grade level are children in rural and urban areas most likely to enrol or drop out of school? What factors account for any age and gender differentiation in drop out?
- What happens to pupils who drop out from school in early, mid and late stages of primary education?
  - Where do they go, what do they do and how do they evaluate their school experiences?

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<sup>1</sup> Individual characteristic include labour status of child, health status, gender, age, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Household characteristics include family income, education of father & mother, etc. – will use similar household characteristics as used by the Ghana DHS



- What proportion of drop outs re-enter and at what grade level do most re-enter?
  - What challenges face drop outs who re-enrol?
  - What policies do schools have to reduce drop out and address the problem of poor attendance of pupils and teachers?
  - What conditions hinder other drop outs from re-enrolling?
- What are the *key determinants* of high and low enrolment in schools in rural and in urban poor areas?
  - What whole school management practices increases the risk of low attendance and drop out?
  - What professional characteristics and practices of teachers increase the risk of low enrolment, irregular attendance and low completion of primary school?

# Access to Basic Education in Ghana: The Evidence and the Issues

## 1. Background and Objectives

### 1.1 Introduction

The Country Analytic Review (CAR) provides a background of shared knowledge, understandings and research evidence about the state of access to basic education in Ghana. It assesses the impact past and present policies on basic education have had on expanding access to all children. As an analytic review it forms the basis for recommending the kinds of research on access that is needed to deepen understandings of the challenges faced in Ghana, as well as what future policies in basic education should focus on to promote meaningful access for all children. Recommendations for further research on access will be incorporated into the second phase of the Consortium for Research on Education Access, Transition and Equity's (CREATE) research agenda in Ghana.

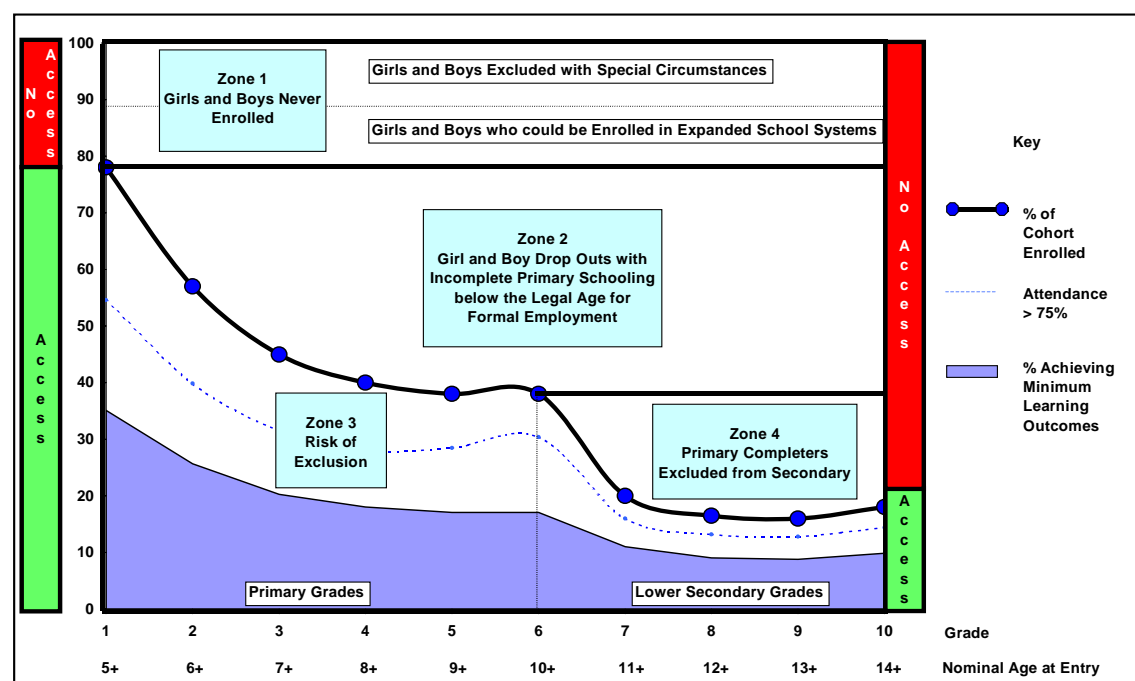
This report addresses a number of main issues. Namely, it:

- Investigates the evolution of access to basic education in Ghana. The objective here is to assess the implications of primary enrolment trends over an extended period of time for policies and practices of basic education.
- Analyzes basic education policies and practices for insight into their significance in the drive to expand access to basic education.
- Unpacks the conditions and factors that underpin access as both a process and outcome and from that develops preliminary understandings of the nature of exclusion from meaningful access.
- Reviews recent empirical and secondary analysis studies on access to basic education and maps out what the key challenges are to expanding access, particularly for poor and marginalized groups in society.
- Provides preliminary policy recommendations and identifies specific issues, themes, and agendas for further research in the second phase of the CREATE research project in Ghana.
- Outlines issues for dialogue with the CREATE national reference group (NRG) in Ghana, which is made up of education stakeholders, development partners, and education NGOs.

To facilitate the study of the problems of access CREATE has developed a conceptual model for researching 'zones of exclusion' from basic education. **Zone 1** describes the children who do not enroll in school at all. **Zone 2** refers to children who enroll in school but drop out before the completion of primary school. **Zone 3** describes children who are currently enrolled in school, and who for various reasons, are believed to be at risk from dropping out. **Zone 4** refers to children who complete primary education, but fail to make the transition from primary to junior secondary school. In using these zones of exclusion, the issue of access can be seen in terms of understanding the social, economic and cultural characteristics of children who occupy each zone, and the appropriate measures that can be identified to target them.

Figure 1 provides a generic model identifying the various zones of exclusion from education.

**Figure 1** <sup>3</sup> Access and Zones of Exclusion from Basic Education



Amongst other things, CREATE aims to:

- 1) Map the current status of access to basic education across the different zones of exclusion and analyse the problems associated with achieving MDG and EFA goals;
- 2) Synthesise what is known about how to improve access and provide examples of better practice for further study; and
- 3) Identify gaps in knowledge and understanding and carry out research to address these gaps.

This Country Analytic Review is the first stage of this process in the Ghanaian context and sets the scene for further research.

The CAR has been developed from a review of available literature around the Ghanaian context; and consultations with major stakeholders have broadened the scope of the work and brought many issues forward for consideration and further study. The CAR is a result of a negotiated process between key educational stakeholders and academic researchers, and provides a basis for future debate and discussion.

The report consists of seven sections. Section 1 provides the background and objectives of the review. Section 2 examines some of the major influences of basic education policies on access. It evaluates past and present policies on basic education

<sup>3</sup> This model has since been modified to include 6 zones of exclusion from basic education. See Appendix 4

in terms of their impact on access to schooling. This section also evaluates the strategies that were proposed to address problems of access as basic education was expanded in Ghana. Section 3 presents an overview of trends and patterns of access in basic education in Ghana. Section 4 re-analyses aspects of the 2003 Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire relevant to issues on access. The analysis here is framed in terms of CREATE's model of the zones of exclusion from basic education (see Figure 1 above). Section 5 presents a review of research on access to basic education in Ghana. Section 6 presents the implications of new understandings about the problems of access for policy and research. Finally, Section 7 summarizes the main issues and findings emerging from the analytic review before setting a research agenda to investigate identified gaps for the second phase of CREATE research in Ghana.

## **2. Assessing the influence of Basic Education Policies on Access**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section describes the policies that have informed activities to expand basic education in Ghana. In particular, it investigates factors that have influenced policies on access to basic education and the current policy strategies to expand access. Much of what is discussed provides the background context for the analysis of trends and patterns of access in sections 3 and 4.

### **2.2 The Early Policies to improve Access**

The current basic education structure and curriculum has its roots in Ghana's colonial past. The earliest schools in pre-colonial period in the Gold Coast were started to educate the mixed race children of European traders. Much later the colonial government provided education to sustain the machinery of colonial rule, but the major effort to expand education was the work of Christian missions who regarded education as necessary for missionary activity. Later, some aspects of pre-independence education were characterized by attempts to create incentives for all children to attend school. Before independence, for example, Northern Ghana was targeted with special incentives i.e. free education to encourage children to enroll.

As demand for education rose, more schools were opened by missionary organizations and, by 1881, about 5000 pupils were enrolled in 139 schools. This expansion concentrated mainly in the south and spread slowly till the era of the Gold Coast governor, Gordon Guggisberg (1919–1927). Guggisberg produced the clearest ideas on educational expansion in colonial Ghana when his administration proposed 16 principles for the development of education in the Gold Coast (see Box 1). These principles stressed equal opportunities for boys and girls, relevance of education to local economic activities, technical and vocational education, the place of the vernacular in teaching, and the importance of well-trained teachers to deliver quality education. By and large, many of these principles have continued to inform post-independence education reform agenda. Guggisberg, however, did not subscribe to the idea of education as a free and compulsory commodity (see Box 1).

As the end of the colonial era approached demand for education became more pressing and in 1945 the government proposed a 10-year education expansion plan which aimed to achieve universal primary education within 25 years (i.e. by 1970). The plan was set within what it judged as affordable limits of educational expansion.

The next significant wave of education expansion was the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) for Education, which aimed to achieve universal primary education (UPE) for all. The ADP produced a basic education structure consisting of: six years of primary education, four years of middle school education (both terminal and continuing) five years of secondary schooling and two years of sixth-form education for entry into university (see Appendix 1 for the Structure of Ghana Education System, 1951-1987).

The main ADP strategy to improve access to basic education was to abolish tuition fees. After independence it was still considered a priority to make basic education

free and the 1961 Education Act was introduced to support this vision. In all, these policies helped expand access rapidly (see Table 1).

### **Box 1: The Sixteen Principles of Governor Guggisberg**

1. Primary education must be thorough and be from bottom to the top
2. The provision of secondary schools with an educational standard that will fit young men and women to enter a university.
3. The provision of a university.
4. Equal opportunities to those given to boys should be provided for the education of girls
5. Co-education is desirable during certain stages of education.
6. The staff of teachers must be of the highest possible quality.
7. Character training must take an important place in education
8. Religious teaching should form part of school life
9. Organised games should form part of school life.
10. The course in every school should include special references to the health, welfare, and industries of the locality.
11. A sufficient staff of efficient African inspectors of schools must be trained and maintained.
12. Whilst an English education must be given it must be based solidly on the vernacular.
13. Education cannot be compulsory or free.
14. There should be cooperation between the Government and the Missions; and the latter should be subsidized for educational purposes.
15. The Government must have the ultimate control of education throughout the Gold Coast.
16. The provision of trade schools with a technical and literary education that will fit the young men to become skilled craftsmen and useful citizens.

(Source: McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975:57)

The ADP had its critics. Busia (1952 cited in Foster, 1965a) argued that it consisted of ‘ill-digested series of proposals based on political expediency.’ Others argued that rapid expansion without ensuring sufficient numbers of trained teachers was unwise because it would compromise quality. Foster (1965a) held a more optimistic view, and argued that the initial dip in quality as a result of rapid expansion was to be expected and did not negate the importance of rapid education expansion. He noted:

‘there is little doubt that the period of rapid expansion did lead to a lowering of academic standards within the primary and middle schools, but it is equally true that the emergency teacher training schemes could enable the system to recover at a rapid rate once the initial peak of enrolments was past. The opponents of the plan, in reiterating criticisms which had formerly led the British administration to proceed cautiously in the diffusion of education facilities, ignored more significant consequences of mass educational expansion’ (Foster, 1965a:190).

**Table 1: Expansion in Education between 1951 and 1966**

Type of School or College	1951		1966	
	No of Schools	No of Students	No of Schools	No of Students
Primary	1,083	153,360	8,144	1,137,495
Middle	539	66,175	2,277	267,434
Secondary	13	5,033	105	42,111
Teacher Training	22	1,916	83	15,144
Technical	5	622	11	4,956
University	2	208	3	4,291

(Source: Hayford B. K., 1988:35).

The concern that rapid expansion undermines quality continues today especially where no effective strategies are in place to train and retain teachers. A further criticism of the ADP was that it created a financial burden for local authorities who were expected to fund about 40 percent of teachers' salaries, with the remaining 60 percent coming from central government. The inability of local councils to discharge this responsibility contributed to some of the difficulties experienced in maintaining the quality of education provision as enrolments increased. Some of the lessons to emerge from the accelerated development of education include the importance of ensuring that teacher supply and demand meets with rapid enrolment expansion; improving the capacity of local authorities to recruit and incentivise local teachers; and finally the importance of management of educational inputs (see McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

There are two main lessons that can be learnt from early policies to expand access to education:

- The need to factor the impact that rapid expansion can have on quality and the risk that this poses to initial enrolment gains if demand softens as quality deteriorates. The imperative is that expansion and quality improvements needs to work in tandem so they can produce mutually beneficial effects.
- A comprehensive plan is required for promoting meaningful access. Issues such as effective teacher supply and management, and improvements in instructional inputs are crucial elements of any expansion policies to improve access for all.

### **2.3 Expanding Access in Northern Ghana**

Rapid expansion in the early years of education development did not benefit every part of the country. Attention focused on the south and created a gap in provision between Northern Ghana (currently the three Northern regions: the North, Upper and Upper West), and the rest of the country. The roots of this gap can be traced to the Guggisberg era which resisted the temptation to expand access rapidly because of its concern about the impact on quality. Basically, the Guggisberg administration adopted a cautious approach (Bening, 1990) – rooted in the principle of developing a

primary education system that was thorough and from the bottom up (see principle 1, Box 1). As McWilliam and Kwamena Poh noted (cited in Akyeampong, 2006:216-7), “the idea of a thorough primary education system meant that even when resources were available to expand access to primary education, and in Guggisberg’s era there was enough to triple provision, there was reluctance to do so because trained teacher demand could not be matched with supply to support accelerated expansion”. Quality was imperative and expanding access was done selectively on the basis of available educational inputs e.g. trained teachers availability and assurances that expanded facilities would not be underutilized. Thus low population density areas particularly in the North did not receive much attention when it came to plans to expand access to primary education. Akyeampong (2006) argues that part of the solution to this problem should have been multigrade teaching because of how it allows for schools of low population density to use just one or two teachers to teach all grades (Little, 2006). This makes redundant the one teacher per class idea as the main quality assurance indicator.

On attainment of independence in 1957, a special scholarship<sup>4</sup> scheme was instituted to close the gap between the North and South of Ghana. Even though this scholarship helped to improve access, Northern Ghana continues to experience low levels of educational performance. For example, repetition rates in primary schools in the North are generally higher than the national average and the phenomenon of out of school children is particularly acute there (see Section 3).

## **2.4 Expanding Basic Education: the Continuation and Junior Secondary School Concept**

After 1966, when the Nkrumah era ended the quality versus expansion debate resurfaced with calls to scale back accelerated education expansion plans and focus more on quality provision. Other concerns included unemployment of school leavers and issues of quality and relevance of education to the world of work. A committee<sup>5</sup> on education recommended that elementary education should be extended to 10 years with a break in year eight for selecting suitable candidates for secondary education. Those who were not selected went on to complete two years continuation classes with an emphasis on pre-vocational education.

This recommendation saw many middle schools become continuation schools in the early 1970s (see Appendix 1). Issues of inadequate access, resulting from non-enrolment and drop-outs did not feature as prominently as they did in the late 1950s to mid 1960. Education developments in the late 1960s to early 1970s conceptualized primary education mainly as preparation for entry to either secondary education or middle schools for early employment. Middle school leavers could attend technical and vocational schools and four-year post-primary teacher training colleges. Concerns

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<sup>4</sup> On the attainment of independence in 1957, a special scholarship scheme was instituted to enable the North and the parts of Brong-Ahafo to achieve educational parity with Southern Ghana and Ashanti. This scheme gave automatic scholarships from primary to tertiary education to any pupil who could show that he was from the North. The scholarships covered tuition fees, boarding and lodging, textbooks, school uniform, stationery, examination fees, transport allowance. Access and participation in the North was much less than in the South; in 1960 the age group enrolled in the North was 11.7%, 31.8% in Brong-Ahafo, compared to an average of 48.9% for all other regions.

<sup>5</sup> The Kwapong Committee was set up in 1967 after the fall of the Nkrumah Government.



about inequitable access to secondary education became an issue in the early 70s (Addae-Mensah et al., 1973). Later the continuation school concept was severely criticized as promoting inferior education for the masses whilst secondary schools became the preserve of elite Ghanaian children (Dzobo, 1987 cited in Ministry of Education, 1999)<sup>6</sup>. The concept of a three-year Junior Secondary School as the common post-primary school for all products of primary schools recommended in 1971 by a Government Committee on Education, was a key recommendation of the “New Structure and Content of Education” in 1973. Primary school was followed automatically and compulsorily by three year junior secondary for all. Selection for entry into a senior secondary school was to take place after junior secondary education.

## **2.5 Later Reforms: From the 1974 to 1987 Education Reforms and 1995 FCUBE**

Educational reforms in 1974 introduced the idea of thirteen years of pre-tertiary education; six years primary school, three years Junior Secondary School (JSS), and four years senior secondary school (SSS). It also mooted the idea of pre-technical and pre-vocational subjects – an attempt to make the JSS curriculum comprehensive and thus cater for all talents and provide them with practical skills.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the 1974 educational reforms in its pilot form coincided with the decline of the Ghanaian economy. Throughout the 1970s the Ghanaian economy declined considerably. In 1982 per capita income was 30% below the 1970 level. The index of real monthly earnings fell from 315 to 62 over this period. This was a period which witnessed acute shortages in teachers, textbooks and instructional materials throughout the country’s schools. Teachers left in droves to neighbouring Nigeria where its new found oil wealth had become a magnet for attracting thousands of teachers seeking better pay and conditions of service. By this time Ghanaian society had become increasingly polarised and education was also increasingly becoming a tool for social stratification (Addae-Mensah, 2000). By 1983 access to basic education and other levels of education were at their lowest (World Bank, 2004).

The coup that brought in the Rawlings government into power in 1981 was basically anti-elitist (Donge, 2003) and came promising to create a more equitable society. Driven by a strong socialist ideological agenda the education system was earmarked for radical reform to achieve two key things. First, reforms were seen as necessary to improve the quality of education provision – a survey had showed that a large majority (often more than 80%) of children completing grade 6, or even JSS 1 ‘were completely illiterate’ (MOEC, 1986). Second, reforms were needed to provide more equitable access to primary and secondary education. In 1985/86 academic year

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<sup>6</sup> Professor Dzobo, chaired the committee which produced the 1974 New Structure and Content of Education. In his address at the National Workshop on the 1987 Educational Reforms, January 14, 1987, said: ‘In spite of the bold educational innovative measures of the 1920s and of the subsequent ones Ghana’s formal education system remained Western and predominantly academic and elitist. As a result of the Accelerated Development Plan of Education in 1951, the pre-university educational system has become increasingly dysfunctional as it turns out a lot of school leavers who have no marketable skills, neither do they have the mind to go into self-employment ventures. These leavers could see no bright future for themselves and they come to constitute a veritable economic and social problem for our society to solve...’ (Dzobo 1987. cited in MOE, 1999, pp. 12 -13).

students in secondary schools represented only 7% of the relevant age group and primary enrolments had stagnated from the early 1980s until 1987 when it started rising (MOEC, 1986).

Thus, the 1987 education reforms set out to improve access to basic education but also emphasized the need to include measures that would improve quality, efficiency, and equity in the education sector. It set the following objectives and introduced a new structure of education (see appendix 2) which was really an implementation of most of the 1974 proposals:

- To expand and make access more equitable at all levels of education;
- To change the structure of the education system to 6 – 3 – 3 – 4, reducing the length of pre-tertiary education from 17 to 12 years;
- To improve pedagogic efficiency and effectiveness;
- To make education more relevant by increasing the attention paid to problem-solving, environmental concerns, pre-vocational training, manual dexterity and general skills training;
- To contain and partially recover costs and to enhance sector management and budgeting procedures.

Progression from primary to junior secondary school required no external examination. The curriculum combined general academic studies and practical skills training<sup>7</sup>. The main objective of the 1987 reforms was to implement the 1974 reforms nation-wide. It also introduced the 3-Year SSS instead of the 2 Year SSS Lower followed by the 2-Year SSS Upper which was proposed under the 1974 plans.

Three principal objectives of the new system were that it would:

- Enable all products of the primary school to have access to a higher level of general academic training as pertained in the lower forms of the traditional secondary school to address the inequity between secondary school and the middle school/continuation school;
- Provide practical skills training in technical and vocational subjects to all children;
- Prepare majority of children whose formal education terminated after JSS for the world of work.

It is now generally acknowledged that the implementation of the technical and vocational aspects of the reform was less successful because of the inadequate supply of well-trained technical and vocational instructors. The JSS workshops intended for pre-vocational and pre-technical education failed to work as planned. But as Foster (1965a) noted years before, the idea that schools would use the skills and expertise of local artisans and craftsmen and women to support teaching pre-vocational and

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<sup>7</sup> Primary level subjects are English Language, Ghanaian Language and Culture, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Integrated Science, Religious and Moral Education. Physical Education, Music and Dance are taught as physical activities. JSS curriculum comprises English Language and Culture, Mathematics, Social Studies, General Science, Agricultural Science, Pre-vocational Skills, Pre-technical Skills, Religious and Moral Education and optional **French**. Other subjects taught but examined internally are Life Skill, Music and Dance, and Physical Education.

technical courses is unlikely to work in practice because it fails to recognize the difficult challenge of implementation.

To date, the 1987 reforms have benefited the most in terms of investment<sup>8</sup> to improve access and quality of basic education, and although it has made an impact on educational performance in Ghana, many educational performance indicators suggest that there is still more to do if the goals of EFA are to be achieved and sustained (see analysis in Section 3).

In 1995, the ‘free compulsory universal basic education’ (FCUBE) reforms were introduced to fix the weaknesses in the 1987 reforms. FCUBE aimed to achieve UPE by 2005. Clearly this target has been missed. Additionally, it sought to improve girls’ enrolment and has generally succeeded in achieving this target (see MOESS, 2006). Implementation of the FCUBE was supported by the World Bank Primary School Development Project (PSDP). Two main areas of activity of the PSDP were the following:

- Policy and management changes: (i) increased instructional time, (ii) reducing student fees and levies, (iii) improve skills and motivation of headteachers, (iv) community involvement in selection of headteachers, (v) orientation of district officials and community leaders, (vi) support to school supervision, and (vii) school mapping
- Investment in physical infrastructure: (i) construction of classrooms, (ii) construction of head teachers’ housing, (iii) provision of roofing sheets. Communities were to be responsible for building the external walls (“cladding”) for pavilions constructed by the project

(World Bank, 2004:21-22)

The FCUBE programme met with several problems and constraints. Management weaknesses undermined its impact including poor supervision at system and school level (Fobih et al., 1999). According to the FCUBE 1999 implementation report, one of the important lessons learnt in the implementation of the FCUBE programme is that, ‘continuing to expand access to basic education and increasing physical inputs into the system are not effective unless the quality of activities at the school level improves significantly’ (MOE, 1999:4). This echoes Guggisberg’s concerns expressed as far back as the 1940s.

The World Bank’s assessment of its role in improving educational access and quality through its support to both 1987 and 1995 reforms is generally positive. It concluded that its contributions have led to “revers(ing) the deterioration of the educational system, the number of schools increased, from 12,997 in 1980 to 18,374 in 2000, the basic school enrolment rate increased since the beginning of the reforms by over 10

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<sup>8</sup> By 2003, over US\$ 500 million of donor funding had been injected into Ghana’s education sector. Funding from the World Bank, the principal donor from 1986 to 1994 were used for school infrastructure development and rehabilitation, teacher training instructional materials including the production of teacher materials and textbooks in primary and JSS. Other support from the World Bank went into head-teachers’ housing (see World Bank, 2004). DFID, USAID, and the European Union also supported various aspects of the reforms

percentage points, the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) data showed improving attendance rates in primary and public schools” (World Bank, 2004).

Despite these appreciable gains, analysis of access indicators show that there are still difficulties in reaching a significant proportion of children who do not enrol at all (see Sections 3 and 4). In particular, gains made in enrolment have been difficult to sustain throughout the 9-year basic education cycle. The Bank’s evaluation report admits that, improving quality and quantity of education infrastructure (i.e. classrooms) is an important strategy *but* is not by itself adequate, and that more needs to be done to ensure equitable access to quality basic education.

## **2.6 The New Education Reforms proposed by the 2002 Review Committee**

An optional two-year nursery schooling for children aged 4 and 5 became part of the mainstream education system in 2002. Starting from 2007 (GOG, 2004) formal basic education has been extended to eleven years, starting with two years kindergarten, followed by six years primary, then three years junior secondary schooling, and finally four years senior secondary schooling. Formal basic education for children is now expected to begin at age 4 and end at age 15 (GOG, 2004).

The recent report of the President’s Committee on review of education reforms in Ghana (GOG, 2004), upon which the government’s White Paper on Education is based, recommended that the lower primary curriculum should consist of seven components. Compulsory elements are: English Language, Ghanaian Language & Basic Mathematical Skills. The remaining four are French (optional), Introduction to ICT; Creative Arts; & PE. Upper primary subjects would consist of nine subjects of which French will be optional. The rest are English Language; Ghanaian Language; Mathematics; Integrated Science & Introduction to ICT; Religious and Moral Education; Citizenship Education; Creative Arts and Physical Education (PE).

The President’s Committee on Education Reforms recommended a core of four subjects. Added to other ‘practical subjects’, however, these would make huge demands on teacher and textbook supply. Ultimately, these have implications for access especially if the management and human resources required to deliver the curriculum is either not available or inadequate. Besides, given the intractable teacher shortage and deployment problems that Ghana continues to face and the difficulties in resolving this problem, (see Akyeampong, 2003) schools in rural areas are likely to find the curriculum requirements difficult to meet, which could have negative consequences on quality and access. See Appendix 3 for the New Structure of Education as in the White Paper.

## **2.7 Recent strategic initiatives to improve Access**

Two policy initiatives stand out in the recent attempt to achieve universal basic education in Ghana. The first is the push for education decentralization and management, and the second is the introduction of capitation grants.

### 2.7.1 Educational Decentralisation and Management

The 1951 ADP provided the foundations for decentralised educational management in Ghana by making local councils responsible for the provision and maintenance of educational facilities, while central government took responsibility for teachers' salaries. The decentralisation process was further strengthened by the Education Act of 1961, which reaffirmed control and management of education at the local level to local councils. However, poor managerial capacity and the weak financial resource base of the local councils appear to have undermined the decentralisation process. Both the 1987 Reform and the 1992 Constitutional Provision re-echoed and re-emphasised the need for decentralisation<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, the Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1998 started a process of de-concentration of pre-tertiary education management by shifting some of its responsibilities and powers in the management of resources, services and staff to district and school levels.

Basically, decentralisation of education is intended to improve the operational efficiency and promote a more responsive approach to education service delivery at the district, community and school level. In line with the expanded mandate under the decentralisation process, emphasis shifted to increasing budget lines and budget shares of the district education office and as a part of the Education Strategic Plan implementation process, districts were mandated to prepare District Education Work Plans (DEWP) reflecting projections and targets up to 2015. Districts are also expected to prepare 3-year Annual District Education Operational Plans (ADEOP) to inform the preparation of district budgets.

In some quarters there is concern that decentralising education provision is happening too quickly and could reinforce disparities and inequities between districts. Districts which lack the required human resource capabilities may find it difficult to tackle problems of access and quality of basic education. Already there is evidence that decentralisation may be contributing to disparities in the quality of public basic schools with implications for access. As noted in the World Bank's (2004) evaluation report,

“Schools in wealthier districts will benefit from both higher levels of district support and higher parental contributions, resulting in discrepancies in resource availability. The worst resourced schools are ‘bush schools’ that is schools in off-road rural communities. Such schools have difficulty in attracting teachers and parents who can ill afford any cash contributions. There is growing dichotomy within the public sector between these schools and those of relatively more affluent parents in urban areas” (World Bank, 2004:16).

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<sup>9</sup> By the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993, devolution was legislated. The law assigns resources, responsibilities and decision making powers over spending priorities to district assemblies. The District Assemblies receive funding from the Central Government Common Fund allocation of 5% revenue, which they are free to spend in accordance with their priorities. Twenty percent of this fund is expected to be allocated to improving education in the area of providing infrastructure. The Ghana Education service is one of the 22 departments to be decentralized under the Local Government Act.

The categorization of deprived districts<sup>10</sup> according to objective criteria which define deprivation of educational facilities provides a mechanism for identifying needs to be addressed to correct imbalances. Rural communities are usually placed at some considerable disadvantage when it comes to assuming greater responsibility for contributing and managing education service provision. If education decentralization is to become an effective vehicle for improving access and quality in public basic education, then there needs to be credible plans that ensure that deprived districts would have the requisite resources and manpower to achieve desirable educational outputs (e.g. high enrollments and better completion rates).

### **2.7.2 Demand-Side Financing of Basic Education - The Capitation Grant Scheme**

In 2004, the Government of Ghana introduced a capitation grant scheme for school operating budgets for primary schools as part of the strategy to decentralize education provision. Originally it was introduced in 40 districts and later extended to 53 districts designated as deprived. In 2005, the scheme was extended nationwide. Currently the capitation per child is on average ₵30,000 (approximately \$3) per enrolled child. Initial evidence indicated that its introduction had led to massive increases in enrolment (overall about an additional 17 percent rise at the basic education level). As a percentage of unit cost per primary school child, however, this amount is insignificant. In 2005, the actual unit cost for a child in a public primary school was ₵644,283 (approximately \$72) (MOESS, 2006). Thus, although the total capitation budget may be high, it has done little to raise the unit cost for a primary child and by implication the quality of education that child receives.

The expansion due to capitation was linked to the ‘abolition’ of fees which was a requirement. In one particular district, additional enrolments included about 33 percent of children who had dropped out (MOESS, 2006). But, as expected the surge in enrolments have brought new challenges and pressures on manpower and resources. Two key ones that have been identified by the Ministry of Education include: (i) the need to improve the infrastructure of public basic schools, and (ii) training of head teachers to manage the funds appropriately to deliver quality learning outcomes (MOESS, 2006).

Currently, the provision of capitation is based on a single allocative formula determined at national level - districts with acute poverty and socio-economically disadvantaged receive the same amount per child as more affluent districts. Clearly, more detailed study is needed to provide insights into how the capitation grant scheme can achieve better pro-poor outcomes. CREATE will research school management responses and parental attitudes to the introduction of the capitation grant.

## **2.8 General Financing of Basic Education**

Since the education reforms of 1987 substantial government and donor funds have gone into funding the basic education sector. Apart from government and external sources, non-statutory funding sources to education have included internally generated funds (IGF) arising from textbook user fees, local authority levies, local

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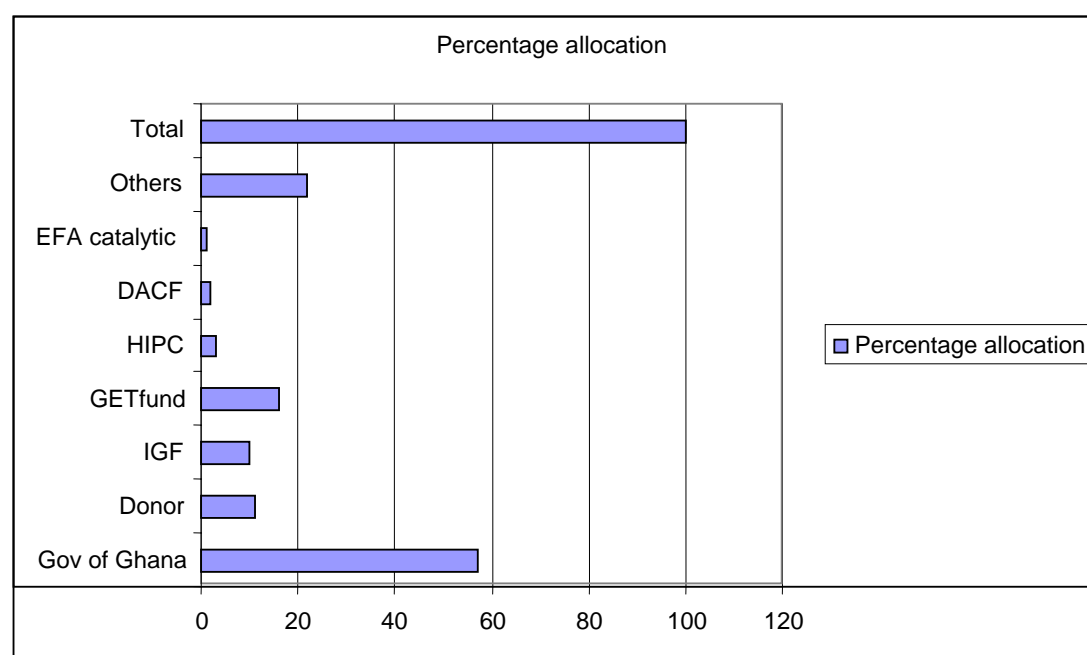
<sup>10</sup> Fifty-three districts are currently identified according to the following criteria: input criteria (seating places per pupil; core textbooks per pupil; percentage of qualified primary teachers; per student budget at primary level; PTR at primary level), access criteria (Gross Enrolment Rate; percentage of girls enrolled); achievement criteria (Pass Rate BECE English; Pass Rate BECE Mathematics)

authority funds, contributions from school management committees, parent teacher associations (SMC/PTAs) and other benevolent societies.

Since 1995 basic education in Ghana has been administered and funded under a sub-sector programme whose sources of funds generally break down as follows: (i) Ghana Government Ministry of Education Budget, (ii) External Funding Agencies (Development Partner contributions and HPIC relief funds), (iii) Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), (iv) District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), (v) Internally Generated Funds (IGF), and (vi) Private Sector/ Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Community based Organisations (CBOs).

Figure 2 below provides a breakdown of costs on the FCUBE programme in 2005. The Government of Ghana budget takes care of personal emolument (salary costs), administrative expenses, and service and investment activities, which leaves very little for school expansion and infrastructure development. Teachers and Education managers' salaries currently take up over 80 percent of the total education expenditure (MOESS 2005a). Resources from the DACF are mostly used to support the provision of infrastructure at the district level. IGF at the basic level are spent by the schools directly and does not form part of the annual budget, but this represent a small percentage of DACF expenditure. IGF's were later abolished in 2005.

**Figure 2: Estimated cost of FCUBE programme in 2005**



(Source: MOESS, 2005a)

The GETFund, is generated from 20 percent of all VAT receipts, is used to supplement financing short falls at both the tertiary and pre-tertiary levels, while the DACF (5 percent of tax revenues) is allocated for local government. Out of this, district assemblies are expected to allocate about 24 percent for the development of basic and secondary education infrastructure. NGO and CBO contributions to educational financing are diverse. Many NGOs provide capacity building rather than direct financing (MOESS, 2005a).

Donor funding and other sources (e.g. from NGOs) go directly to fund school quality improvement, with external/donor inflows often used to supplement GOG shortfalls. These resources reflect expenditures under educational programmes/projects supported by the international funding agencies<sup>11</sup>. Within the external/donor inflow, are resources made available for education resulting from HIPC debt relief. Since 2005 an additional external funding source has been the EFA catalytic funds. Donor funding is a major component of non-salary expenditure<sup>12</sup> in education. Of the projected total resource envelope for education in 2005 (¢ 6.8 trillion), government contributions accounted for 57 percent, donor 11 percent and GETFund 22 percent (MOESS, 2005a:97).

An analysis of recent trends in funding shows that the government of Ghana funding of Education (total resource envelop) has declined, whilst donor funding has remained generally below 10 percent (see Table 2 below).

**Table 2: Overall Funding to the Education Sector**

Total Resource Envelope	2004		2005		2006	
	Amount in ¢000'000	Share (%)	Amount in ¢000'000	Share (%)	Amount in ¢000'000	Share (%)
GOG	3,918,452	68	4,855,539	66	5,323,202	61
Donor	420,092	7	618,750	8	737,142	8
Other						
IGF	528,278	9	690,175	9	812,840	9
GETFund	548,050	9	715,566	10	1,306,000	15
HIPC	274,229	5	312,956	4	300,000	3
DACF	104,840	2	86,400	1	168,000	2
Other sources EFA/FTI			34,850		136,785	2
SIF (support to capitation grants)			47,500	1		
Total	5,794,041	100	7,361,737	100	8,783,969	100

(Source: MOESS, 2006:107)

These funding patterns raise the importance of making strategic choices and reassessing the targets and goals for achieving EFA in Ghana. Without a significant injection of funds to basic education sustainable gains in access where expansion and quality improvement take place concurrently to ensure 'meaningful access' are unlikely to be achieved. What is also required is a re-examination of general education expansion plans to ensure that they are underpinned by a more realistic

<sup>11</sup> DFID, the World Bank, African Development Bank USAID, JICA UNICEF, GTZ and UNESCO etc

<sup>12</sup> Infrastructure, furniture, furnishing, textbooks, teacher accommodation and recently capacity building, food rations, school uniforms etc, for pupils, especially girls in deprived communities.



assessment of capacity and resources. In addition, it is important for post-basic expansion plans to take into account its impact on basic education sector which still requires substantial funding to achieve the 2015 targets. Research suggests a direct relationship between high secondary education household costs and low demand for primary education (see Section 5). This should not mean holding back on plans to expand access to post-basic education, but rather that plans are devised that link progress towards EFA with realistic expansion of the post-basic sector. The Ministry of Education's own analysis (MOESS, 2006) shows that in 2004, it cost about 14 times as much to educate a tertiary student as a primary student. This has dropped to 10 times but even so, if a serious attempt is to be made to enrol all out of school children this will mean finding more resources for the basic education sector.

The expansion of basic education from 9 to 11 years, coupled with other commitments of the GOG to expand and improve access to post-basic education has huge financial and capacity implications. According to the 2006 sector performance report (MOESS, 2006), the 10 year work plan for the education sector was estimated in May 15, 2006 to cost \$15.4 billion (annually about \$1.5 billion). Further increases in basic school enrolments would raise these levels even more. Unless, donors increase their investment significantly and directly to support the expansion of basic education, increased enrolments will be difficult to sustain. Already expenditure on primary education is falling behind the targets set in Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (see Table 3). The lesson from history suggests that expanding access is not simply a question of adequate financial resources; it is also about the system's capacity to address the non-financial constraints of expansion. Ensuring that children start school early is important but is no guarantee that they will complete the full cycle of basic education if the needed educational inputs and facilities are not present to mutually reinforce the effects.

**Table 3: Education Strategic Plan (ESP) Targets**

	<b>Year</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>ESP target</b>	% recurrent expenditure on primary education	34.7%	36.6%	37.6%	37.7%	37.2%	34.4%
<b>Actual Expenditure</b>	Recurrent Expenditure on Primary Education	892,738	1,492,132	1,688,808	1,988,137		
	% Recurrent Expenditure on primary education	34.8%	39.7%	31.6%	31.8%		

(Source: MOESS, 2006)

Ghana EMIS analysis in 2001 (MOE, EMIS data, 2001) produced estimates which showed the type of inputs required to accommodate out-of-school 6 to 11 year olds. At the primary level, the analysis revealed that there are around 40 districts that need a minimum of 20 to 50 primary schools to accommodate this out of school group, if they were all to enroll. Approximately 50 districts needed a minimum of 50 to 100

schools, and approximately 20 districts needed a minimum of 100 schools. It may be that the situation has improved today, but clearly given current levels of investment into basic education, if the goal is to enroll all school-age children (including the new 4 year olds as intended in current reforms) then this will require projections and new targets that extends beyond those set for 2015.

The structure of basic education funding means that there is little scope for the rapid expansion of school facilities to cope with high enrolments. Unless there is a massive injection of external funding to support school infrastructure development, the recent enrolment gains due to capitation will not be sustainable. As the 2006 Education Sector Performance report points out, already many classrooms are overcrowded and “the absence of corresponding classrooms, teaching and learning materials and staff to match the ever increasing pupil population (is) affecting teaching and learning” (MOESS, 2006: 28). Again this takes us back to the point about ‘meaningful access’ and the fact that access is meaningless unless it also guarantees a good measure of quality education.

### 3. Access to Basic Education in Ghana: Overview of Trends and Patterns

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this section an overview of the trends and patterns of access to basic education in Ghana is provided.

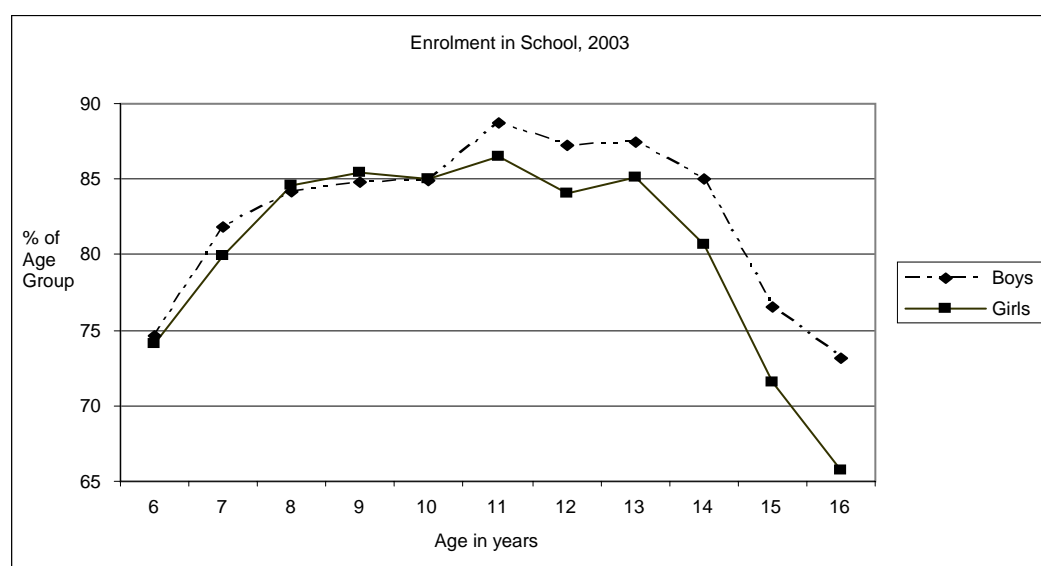
#### 3.2 General Trends and Patterns

To gain a better understanding of what the critical problems are with respect to access to basic education, it is necessary to explore trends and patterns of access by grade and over time. This has the potential to provide preliminary insights into the nature of the challenge if Ghana is to achieve its 2015 EFA goals.

##### *Enrolments*<sup>13</sup>

An estimate of enrolment in school for children aged 6-16 years, irrespective of grade, reveals that children between the ages of 8-13 (14 for boys) are most likely to be enrolled in school (see Figure 3). There is a rapid increase in enrolment rates amongst children aged 6-8, and declining enrolment rates for children from the age 13 years. The decline in enrolment is quite sharp amongst children aged 14 -16 years (see Figure 3). Amongst girls aged 6-10 years, the enrolment rate is not significantly different to that of boys. The gap widens, however, for children aged 11-16 years, where the enrolment rate of girls is lower than that of boys by almost 8 percentage points. Thus, girls enrolling in primary school later than the official entry age are more likely to drop out, especially as they approach adolescence.

**Figure 3: Enrolment Rate Irrespective of Level of Education, 2003**

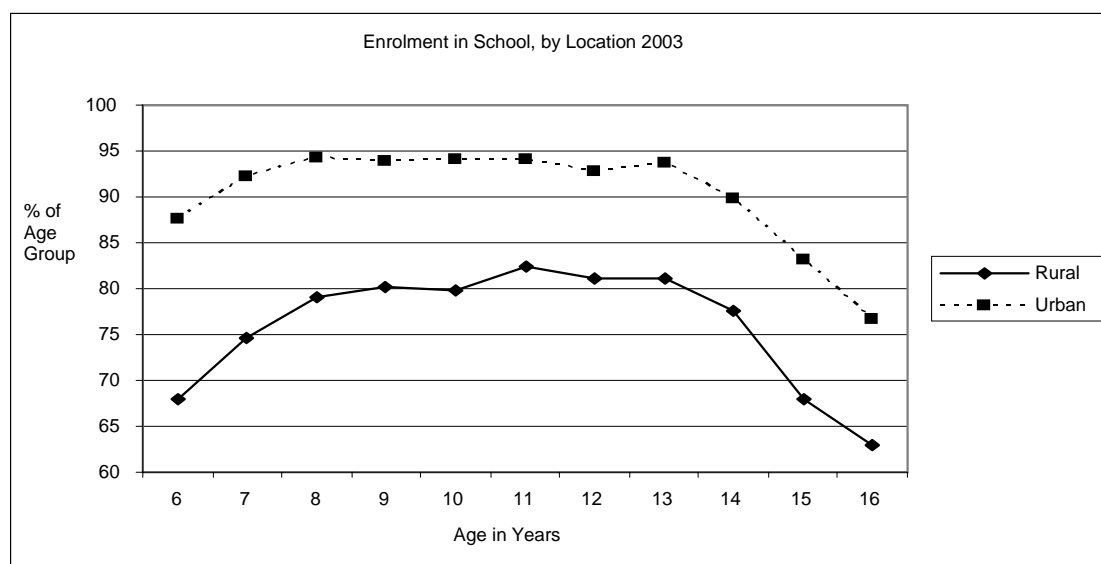


(Source: GSS, 2003a)

<sup>13</sup> Based on Ghana Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) Survey (2003) – for a note on cautious interpretation of this survey see Section 4

Figure 4 shows the percentage of rural and urban children enrolled in school. It indicates that rural children are significantly less likely than urban children to be enrolled in school, irrespective of the age-group.

**Figure 4: Enrolment in school by location, 2003**



(Source: GSS, 2003a)

Table 4 provides information about net enrolment rates in schooling for 2003. Net primary enrolment rates<sup>14</sup> using household information from the CWIQ are estimated at about 70% which as expected is much lower than the national GERs. The net junior secondary enrolment rate is also much lower than its corresponding gross enrolment figure, at about 26%<sup>15</sup>. The large difference between the gross and net enrolment rate estimates can be explained by the definition of the population that is used to estimate these rates. Because of late entry into primary school, the primary school population has a mean age of 7.5 years in primary one and a mean age of 13.3 years in primary six. The junior secondary population has a mean age of 14.3 years in form one and mean age of 16.2 years in form three. Specific conditions in Ghana such as socio-economic conditions and cultural norms translate into an actual school population age distribution that is slightly higher and different from the desired official levels. At the JSS level girls attendance rates are higher than boys especially in urban areas.

The CWIQ data is corroborated by the recent Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (UNICEF et al., 2007) which revealed that the secondary school net attendance ratio for girls was about 39% whilst that of boys approximately 37%. MICS data also showed that gender parity for primary school is 1.0, indicating no difference in the attendance of girls and boys to primary school. However, the indicator value increases slightly to 1.1 for secondary education. The disadvantage for

<sup>14</sup> The net enrolment rate is defined as the ratio of the primary school pupils aged 6-11 years to the population aged 6-11 years.

<sup>15</sup> The net junior secondary enrolment rate is the ratio of junior secondary pupils aged 12-14 to the population aged 12-14 years.

girls is particularly pronounced for Volta region, whilst for boys this is evident in Upper East, and Upper West, Western and Brong Ahafo regions.

Net primary enrolment rates are significantly lower amongst rural children compared to urban children and the gap widens at the junior secondary level (see Table 4). The existence and widening of the rural-urban gap at JSS may be explained by the relatively late age entry into primary school of rural children. Net junior secondary school enrolment rates amongst rural children are significantly lower compared to the urban rate because of the significantly larger proportion of rural children who have never attended school.

## Gender

The net primary enrolment rate of girls was not statistically different from that of boys in 2003 (see Table 4). The pattern pertaining at the national level also pertains amongst rural and urban communities. A gender gap exists at the junior secondary level amongst urban children. The mean urban net junior secondary enrolment rate amongst girls is higher than that of boys by about 4 percentage points (Table 4). An investigation into enrolment rates by welfare quintile reveals that amongst children from the lowest welfare quintile the junior secondary enrolment rate amongst girls is lower than that of boys. However, amongst children in the fourth and fifth welfare quintiles the reverse is the case (see Table 4).

## Welfare

Children from households in the lowest welfare quintile have significantly lower net primary and junior secondary enrolment and attendance rates compared to children living in households with higher welfare measures (see Table 5). Children from households in the lower welfare quintile are likely to enter primary school at an older age compared to children from households in higher wealth quintiles, and are also more likely to drop out of school. Children from the wealthiest households are twice as likely to be in school as children from the poorest households. At JSS they are more than three times as likely (see Table 5).

Both core welfare indicator (CWIQ) and the MICS data are based on self-reported surveys and, therefore, some variations in the figures are to be expected. Besides the MICS data on net attendance does not discriminate between primary or secondary. All the same the differences between both data by welfare quintile are not exceedingly different (see Tables 4 and 5).

**Table 4: Primary school net attendance ratio, 2006: Percentage of primary school age attending primary or secondary school (NAR)**

	Male	Female	Total
Poorest	45.2	41.4	43.4
Second	59.8	59.3	59.6
Middle	66.8	71.0	68.9
Fourth	74.7	74.1	74.4
Richest	84.8	82.9	83.9

(Source: UNICEF et al., 2007)

**Table 5: Net Enrolment Rates, 2003**

	All	Rural	Urban
Primary	0.699	0.647	0.793
Boys	0.699	0.646	0.797
Girls	0.700	0.648	0.789
Junior Secondary	0.264	0.188	0.373
Boys	0.253	0.190	0.354
Girls	0.275	0.185	0.392

	Primary			JSS		
Welfare Quintile	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls
Lowest	0.538	0.544	0.532	0.112	0.119	0.103
2	0.706	0.710	0.702	0.220	0.216	0.225
3	0.766	0.767	0.766	0.304	0.301	0.306
4	0.797	0.791	0.802	0.360	0.353	0.366
Highest	0.781	0.780	0.782	0.415	0.397	0.430

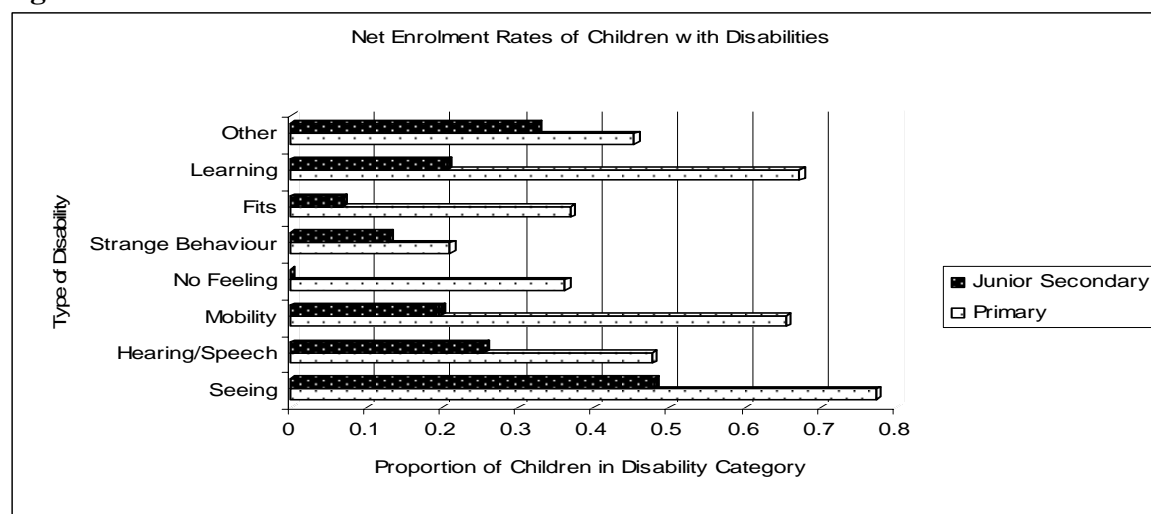
Region	Primary	JSS
Western	0.749	0.259
Central	0.726	0.277
Greater Accra	0.809	0.447
Volta	0.647	0.216
Eastern	0.756	0.272
Ashanti	0.789	0.337
Brong Ahafo	0.693	0.192
Northern	0.499	0.094
Upper East	0.561	0.111
Upper West	0.511	0.133

(Source: GSS, 2003a)

### Physically and Mentally Challenged Children

The likelihood that a physically or mentally challenged child will be enrolled in school depends to a large extent on the circumstances of the child. The net primary enrolment rate of children with sight problems is at about 77%. Children having fits, behavioural problems and ‘feeling’ (numbness) difficulties are particularly disadvantaged in terms of access (Figure 5). The net junior secondary enrolment rate is significantly lower than the net primary enrolment rate for all categories of physically and mentally challenged children.

**Figure 5: Net Enrolment of children with disabilities**



(Source: GSS, 2003a)

### Improved Educational Enrolment

The World Bank (2004) impact evaluation of basic education in Ghana used survey analysis to compare educational performance data in 1986 with that in 2003. It concluded that the downturn in enrolment that had begun in the mid 1970s had been reversed as a direct result of the subsequent reforms, and that more children are attending and finishing school than had been the case 15 years previously. Furthermore that by 2000, most Ghanaians (over 90 percent) aged 15 and above had attended school at some stage, compared to only 75 percent who had done so 20 years earlier and completion rates had improved for all income groups. But the point that over 90 percent of Ghanaians aged 15 and above has attended school at some stage appears rather high given other evidence examined in this review. Nevertheless, the key conclusions of this influential report are worth restating as it illustrates the scale of improvements just as much as it raises new questions for consideration by policy makers and researchers. The report notes that:

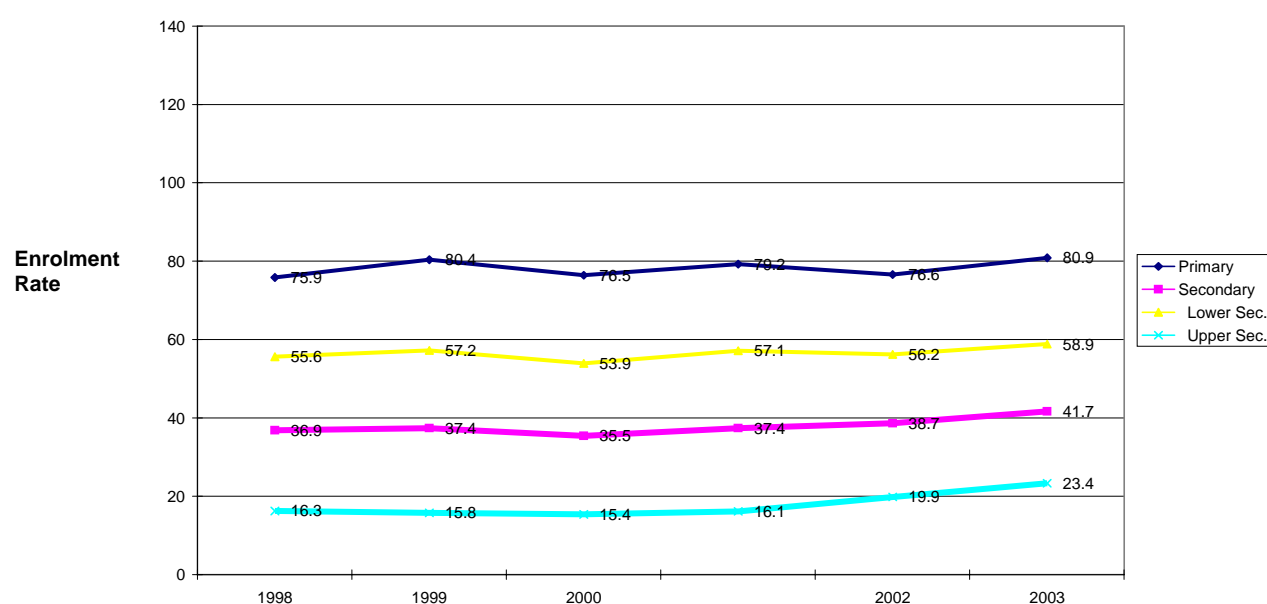
“Growing enrolments have narrowed enrollment differentials. The gap between male and female enrolments has been virtually eliminated ... Enrolments have expanded most rapidly in the savannah (Northern and the two Upper regions), where the attendance rate for 7-12 year olds was just 52 percent in 1988 ... although rural enrolments have risen, they have not done so more quickly than those in urban areas so that the differentials has remained. Finally, primary enrolments have risen more rapidly among the poor than the non-poor, *although a substantial gap remains* ... the narrowing of the gap in enrolments between the poor and non-poor means that support of the expansion of primary education has been pro-poor. *But for junior and senior secondary schools enrollments have grown more rapidly among the less poor*” (World Bank 2004:32-33, emphasis added)

These findings suggest that Ghana has made significant strides towards the provision of basic education for all children. Nevertheless, it is the case that primary gross enrolment rates have stalled around the 80 percent mark (see Figure 6). The latest EMIS data indicates that GER is approaching the 90 percent mark (MOESS, 2006)

which may be the effect of capitation grants which is tied to the provision of fee-free basic education. It is too early to judge whether the gains will be sustained over time. But looking back, after 15 years of reforms, Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) as calculated from EMIS data have risen by just about 5 percentage points, and are showing little sign of significant increase towards levels above 100 percent.

The World Bank study re-calculated GERs based on different assumptions<sup>16</sup> and has arrived at much higher GERs, above 100 percent. After it also applied the same adjustments as used in the MOESS figures (re-estimation of the school age population to interpolate with a constant growth rate from 1986-2000, and (ii) adjustment of the 2000 enrollments), the study reported GERs close to the trends shown in Figure 6 (for primary & lower secondary). Figure 6 shows that from 1998 to 2003 GERs for all levels of pre-tertiary education have remained at a near constant level, only rising slightly in 2003. Focusing on GERs, however, is insufficient for assessing real improvements in access. What is required is a study of trends over the full basic education cycle to understand fully whether children who enroll, irrespective of gender and socio-economic background, have now a better than average chance of completing successfully.

**Figure 6: Gross Enrolment Rate 1998-2003 by Year**



(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

### Age/Grade Enrolments

The official age for entry into primary schooling in Ghana is six years of age. However, only about a third (31%) of the primary 1 population in 2003 was aged 5-6 years old. The mean age primary one children in 2003 was estimated at 7.5 years, and this would include both late entries, older-age entries, and repeaters (see Figure 7). A slightly higher proportion of girls in primary 1 are 5 or 6 years old compared to the proportion of boys. However, the population of girls in primary 1 aged 5 to 8 is the

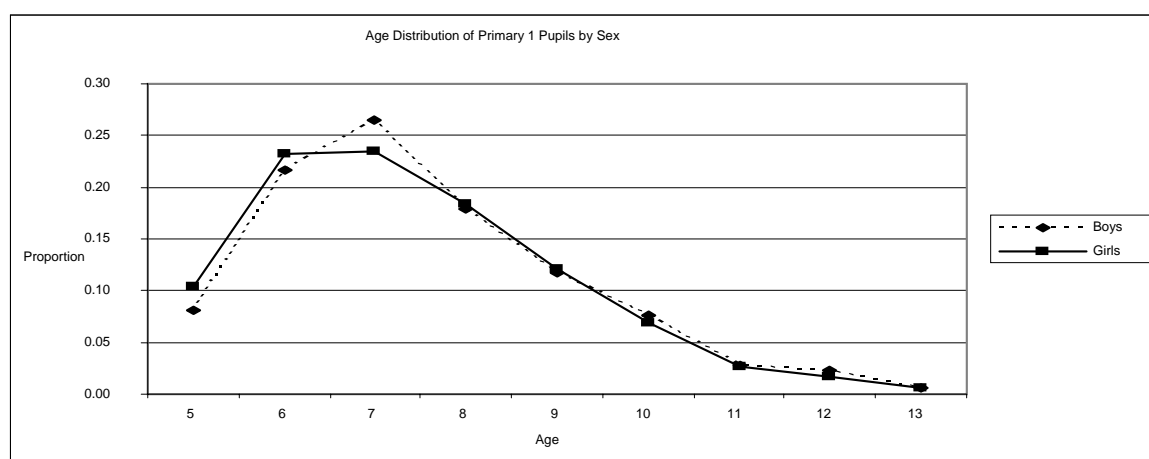
<sup>16</sup> It based its calculations on survey rather than school census data, and used 7-12 years as the appropriate school age instead of the more commonly used 6-11 (see World Bank, 2004)



same as that of boys, i.e. 56%. Children in primary class 1 in rural schools were on average older than those in urban schools. About 64% of primary class 1 pupils in urban schools were aged 5 to 7 years compared to 53% in rural schools.

Figure 8 shows the age-distribution ratio of pupils in primary one in 2003. The population of children from households in the lowest welfare quintile in primary 1 had an older age structure compared to the children from the highest welfare quintile. Whereas 49% of children from the lowest welfare quintile in primary 1 were aged 5-7 years, the proportion rose to 69% for children in the highest welfare quintile. Children from more affluent households are likely to start school earlier. But, even among this group there is still a significant minority (31 percent) who are starting school above the official entry age. The probability that a child currently classified as not enrolled will enroll increases up to 7 years beyond which the likelihood of entering primary school declines - eight-year old children and older are less likely to enroll.

**Figure 7: Age distribution of children in primary 1, 2003**

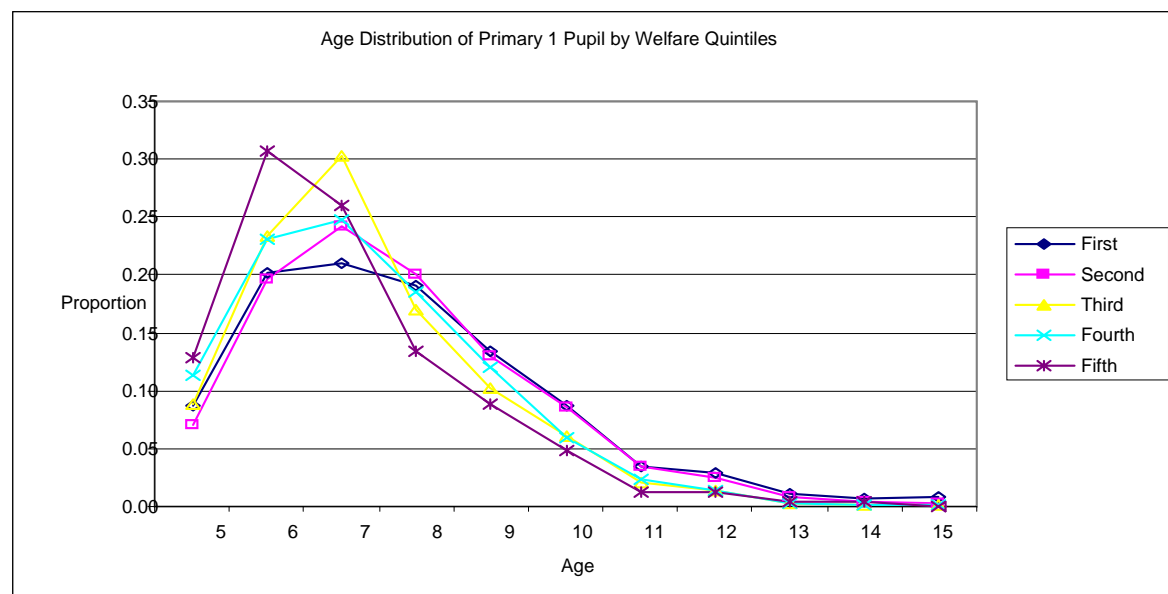


(Source: GSS, 2003a)

### Gross Enrolment Grade

Analysis of GERS by grade (see Figure 9) reveals a near constant decline in GER by grade irrespective of year suggesting that as children progress through schooling their numbers decrease almost at a constant rate. The trend is points to inefficiencies in the education system resulting from repetition (although low) and dropout. Many more children may be completing primary school, but as a proportion of cohorts which start grade 1, not much has changed over the years. Thus, while the 1987 reforms produced improvements in primary enrolments and retention rates, the overall structure of enrolment by grade has remained largely unchanged within the six year period of enrolment data studied (see Figure 10).

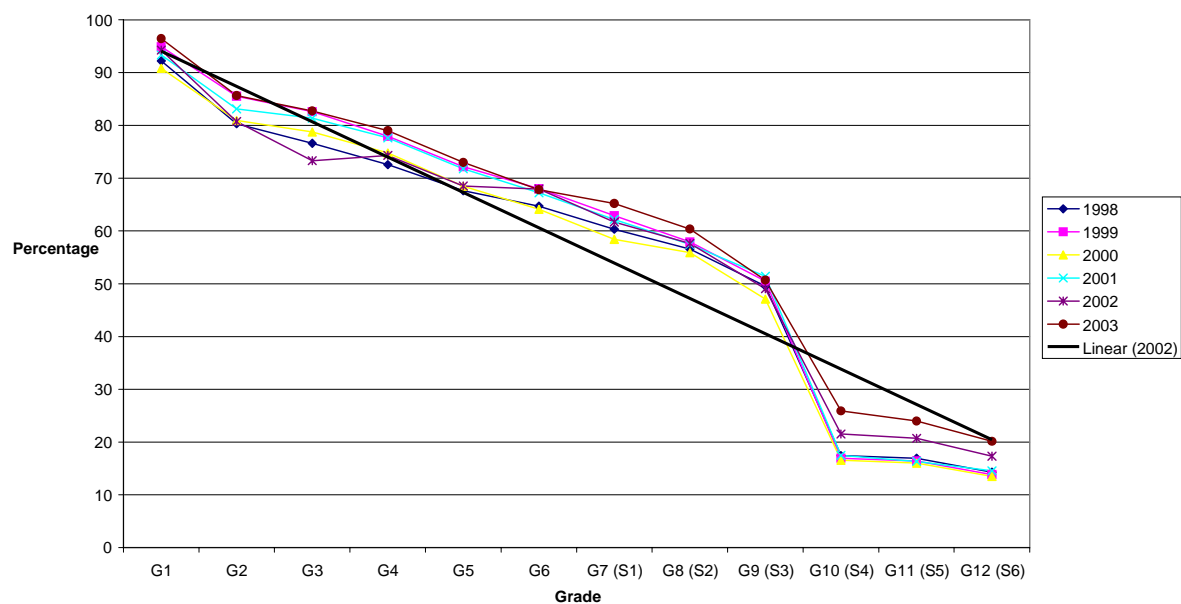
**Figure 8: Age-distribution of pupils in primary one by welfare quintile, 2003**



(Source: GSS, 2003a)

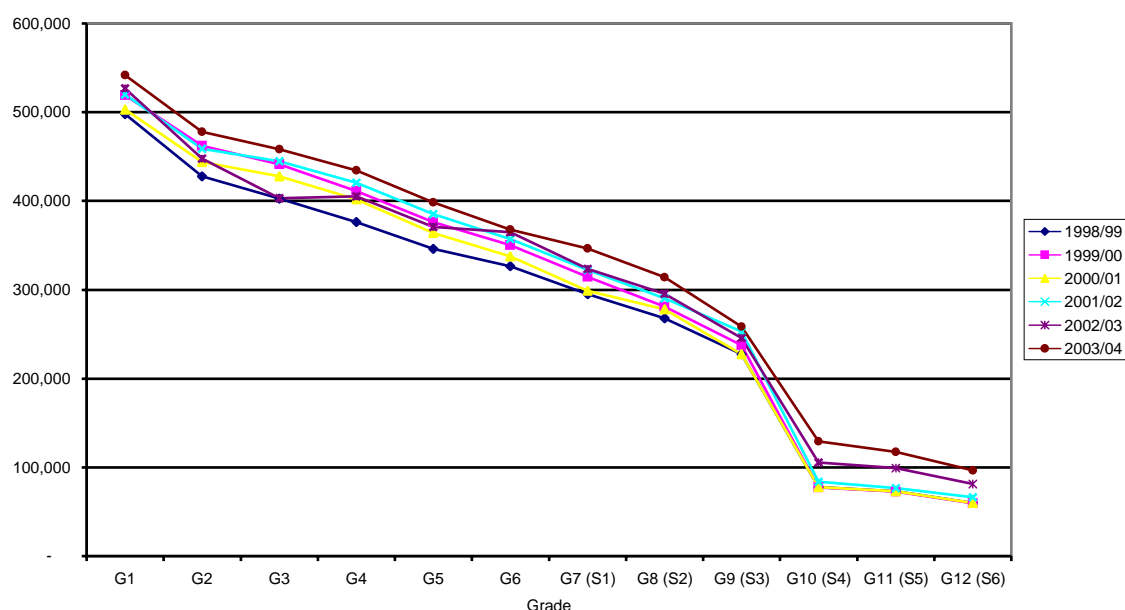
This trend reveals that whatever has been attempted over the years to improve access the effect has not been sustainable – increased access soon revert to the downward decline in enrolment by grade.

**Figure 9: Ghana: Gross Enrolment Rate 1998-2002**



(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

**Figure 10: Ghana: Enrolment by Grade 1998-2004**



(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

Table 6 below shows the number of students in single grade groups in grades 1 to 9 for 2000/2001. It illustrates just how significant the issue of age is to enrolment and participation in basic education in Ghana, and must be a factor in explaining why consistently high enrolments in the early grades are not maintained through out all the grade levels. Overage enrolments risk irregular attendance and drop out (see Section 5 for research evidence which backs this assertion). In Ghana, the official age for starting grade 1 (primary 1) is six years. Thus in grade 2 they are expected to be seven, and grade 3 eight etc. The shaded boxes represent the target age for each grade. Students shown in areas above the shaded portion are under-aged, while those below the shaded areas are over-aged. The table demonstrates that the number of children in the shaded boxes is a small proportion of the total number of students for that grade. In all the grades, overage children constitute the largest proportion of children. In the primary grades it is particularly high from grades 2 to 5. It peaks again in grades 8 and 9 (i.e. JSS 2 & 3).

Underage children start at a high of 16% in grade 1 and drops to just fewer than 10% in grade 6. In grade 7 (JSS1), about a fifth of the pupils are below the official age entry grade. Overall, the data indicate that children are beginning school at a late age, repeating grades, or dropping in and out of the school system. This is depicted more vividly in Figure 11 where it shows that the vast majority of children in primary 1 are overage and generally reduces as one moves higher up the grade. The figure also shows how the age to grade overlaps right across the basic education cycle. This is suggestive of a system which is inefficient and generating high schooling costs. A more efficient age to grade system would be depicted by very narrow spreads and no overlaps (i.e. very low standard deviation). In addition, a large age-range within each grade poses educational challenges for teachers attempting to facilitate learning for children of very different learning abilities, interests, maturity levels and peer

relationships. What this does is to add to the difficulty of providing quality education and discourage parents, especially if they are poor, from sending their children to school. Research shows that proximate availability, quality, relevance, and low or no cost, are key motivators for parents to send their children to school, and if these are unfavourable children are likely to drop out (see Section 5 for a review of access related research in Ghana).

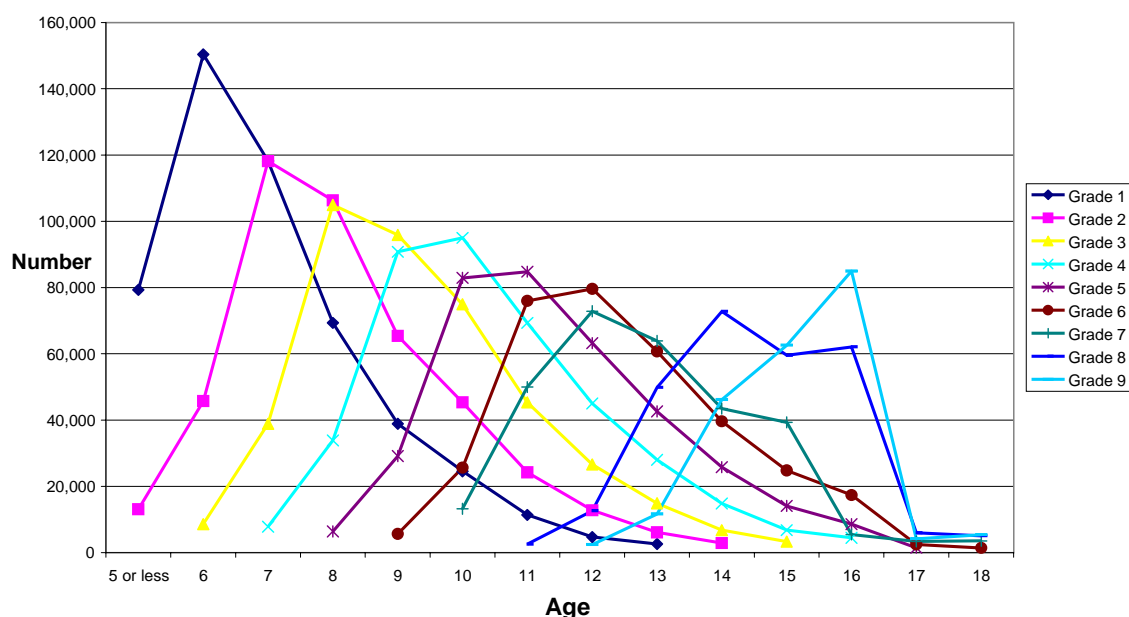
Table 6: Number of students of different ages in grades 1 to 9, 2000/01

Age	Grade									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
No age data	3,841	3,763	7,259	5,728	4,874	4,042	6,947	7,295	10,200	53,949
5 or less	79,302	13,074	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	92,377
6	150,353	45,723	8,600	-	-	-	-	-	-	204,676
7	118,231	118,183	38,881	7,795	-	-	-	-	-	283,090
8	69,331	106,343	104,980	33,865	6,386	-	-	-	-	320,905
9	38,897	65,402	95,934	90,808	29,157	5,661	-	-	-	325,860
10	24,544	45,362	74,956	95,030	82,954	25,655	13,224	-	-	361,734
11	11,378	24,249	45,342	69,360	84,813	75,992	49,968	2,547	-	363,648
12	4,724	12,792	26,614	44,995	63,216	79,623	72,847	12,644	2,425	319,881
13	2,591	6,090	14,887	28,036	42,634	60,754	63,927	49,907	11,657	280,482
14	-	2,892	6,794	14,857	25,821	39,651	43,466	72,802	46,217	252,499
15	-	-	3,324	6,781	14,104	24,772	39,364	59,551	62,598	210,493
16	-	-	-	4,493	8,624	17,380	5,504	62,133	84,968	183,102
17	-	-	-	-	1,498	2,516	3,370	5,975	4,213	17,572
18	-	-	-	-	-	1,435	3,582	5,095	5,407	15,519
<b>Total</b>	<b>503,193</b>	<b>443,872</b>	<b>427,571</b>	<b>401,748</b>	<b>364,081</b>	<b>337,490</b>	<b>298,222</b>	<b>277,948</b>	<b>227,684</b>	<b>3,281,810</b>
% overage	55%	60%	64%	66%	66%	50%	55%	76%	72%	
% underage	16%	13%	11%	10%	10%	9%	21%	5%	6%	

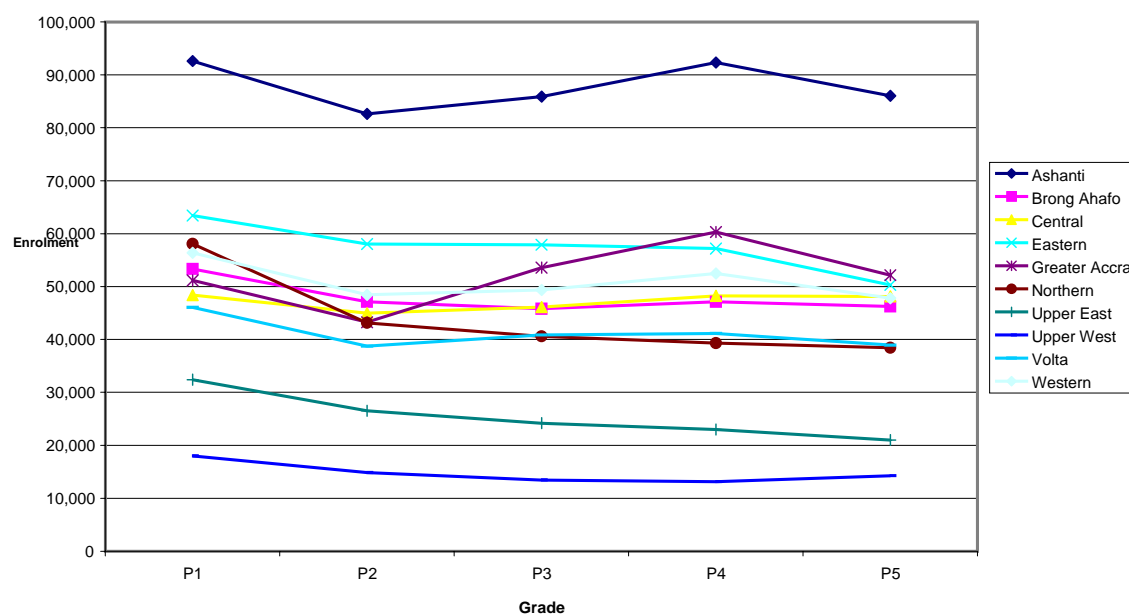
(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data, 2002)

Cohort tracking analysis provides another layer of understanding about system efficiency in moving children successfully through the school system. Figure 12 charts enrolment in P1 in 2001/02, P2 in 2002/3 etc. until P5 in 2005/06. It is evident that the national trend is influenced by what happens in Ashanti and Greater Accra – the two most populated urban regions in the country. It is not entirely clear why these regions show a different trend (rise in enrolments from grade 2 to 4). It could be due to the effects of migration from other parts especially the north but perhaps more likely, increasing repetition at these grades. The other regions show a smoother trend. Interpretation of the cohort tracking does not take into account repetition and may also be affected by EMIS returns which fluctuate slightly every year. Thus, these figures have to be interpreted with caution. Figure 13 shows the national trend. Clearly grade 4 is a critical point after grade 1 in the early primary education cycle after which another significant wave of drop out occurs. This is consistent with Table 6 where overage enrolment peaks before it drops and then picks up again in grades 7 and 8.

**Figure 11: Number of pupils by grade by age**



**Figure 12: Cohort tracking (P1 2001/2 to P5 2005/6)**

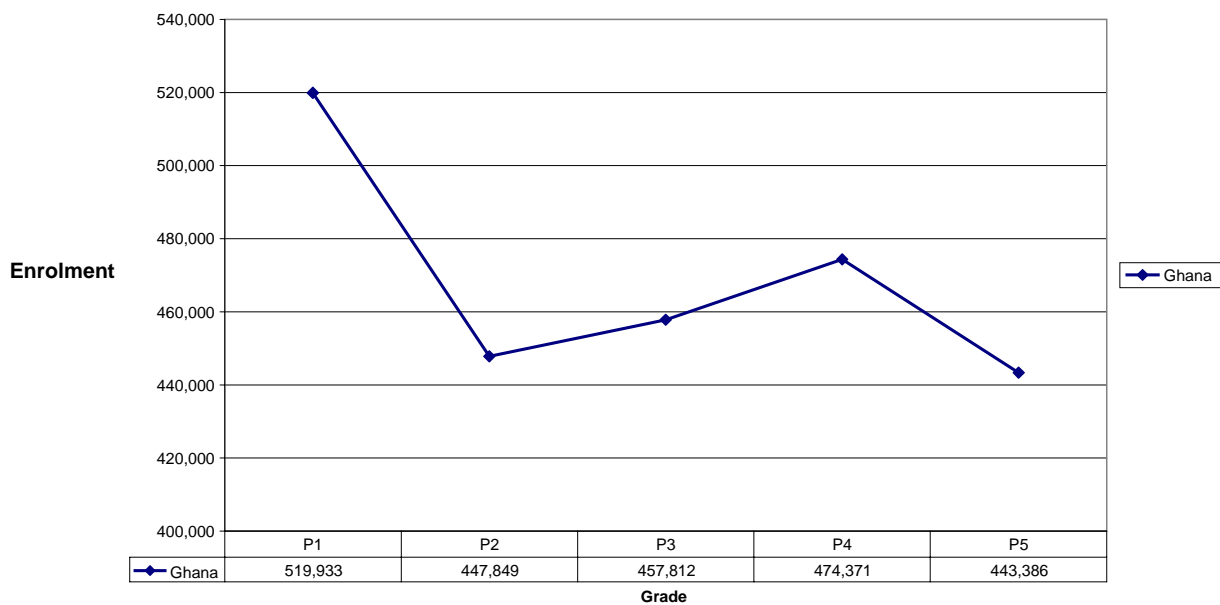


(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

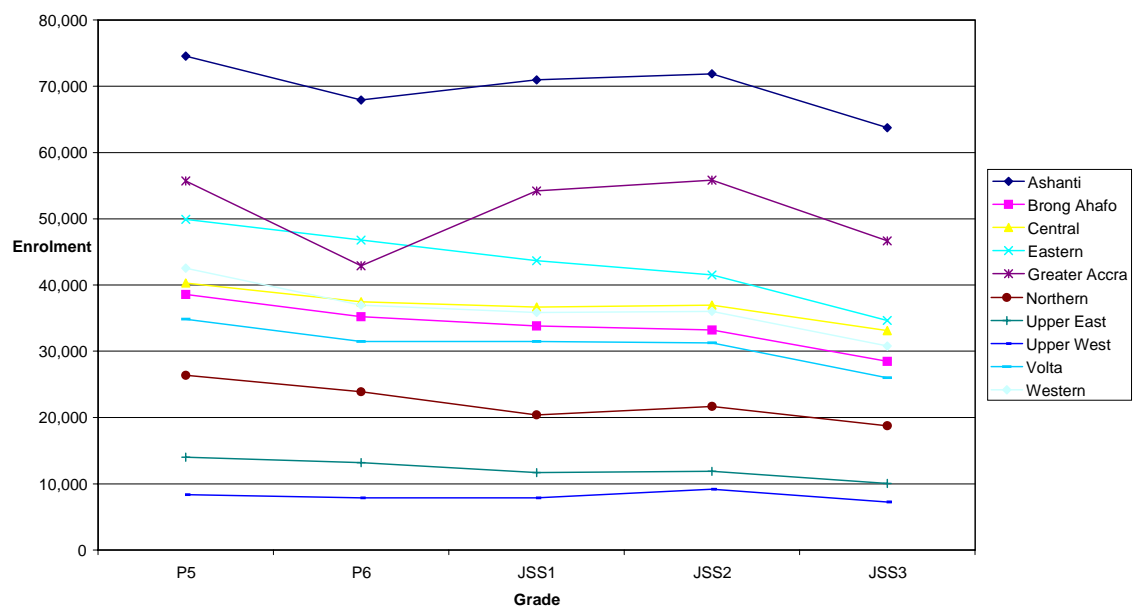
Cohort tracking analysis from P5 to JSS 3 shows a similar trend in terms of the regional patterns (see Figure 14). Again, Ashanti and Greater Accra regions show a markedly different trend from the rest of the country. We could speculate that this is the effect of migration or repetition. For the other regions the enrolment trend is smoother. In Upper East and Upper West, although enrolments are low, it does appear that once pupils reach primary 5 they are likely to continue to the end of JSS3. Although the Northern region exhibits a similar pattern, its features are similar to that

of Ashanti and Greater Accra, where there is slight increase from JSS1 to JSS2 after which it reverts to ‘normal’ trend (i.e. significant drop between JSS2 and JSS3). The national trend for P5 to JSS3 is depicted in Table 15. Clearly it is at the primary level of basic education where there appears to be bigger losses in terms of drop out, if we discount repetition as a significant factor.

**Figure 13: Ghana Cohort Tracking (P1 2001/2 to P5 2005/6)**

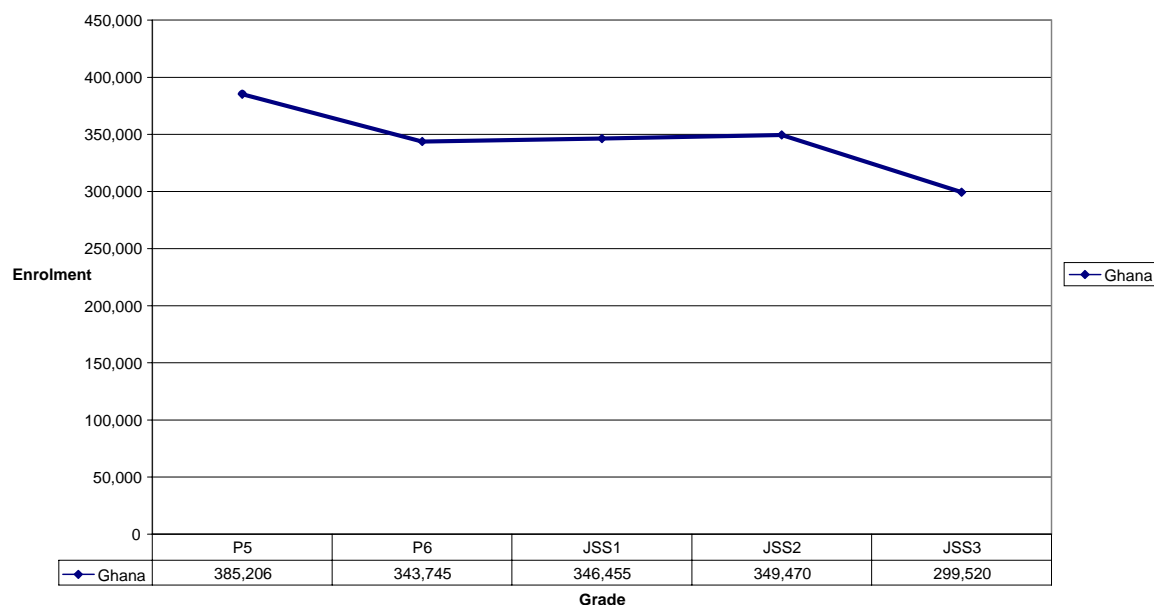


**Figure 14: Cohort tracking, P5 in 2001-2 to JSS3 in 2005-6**



(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

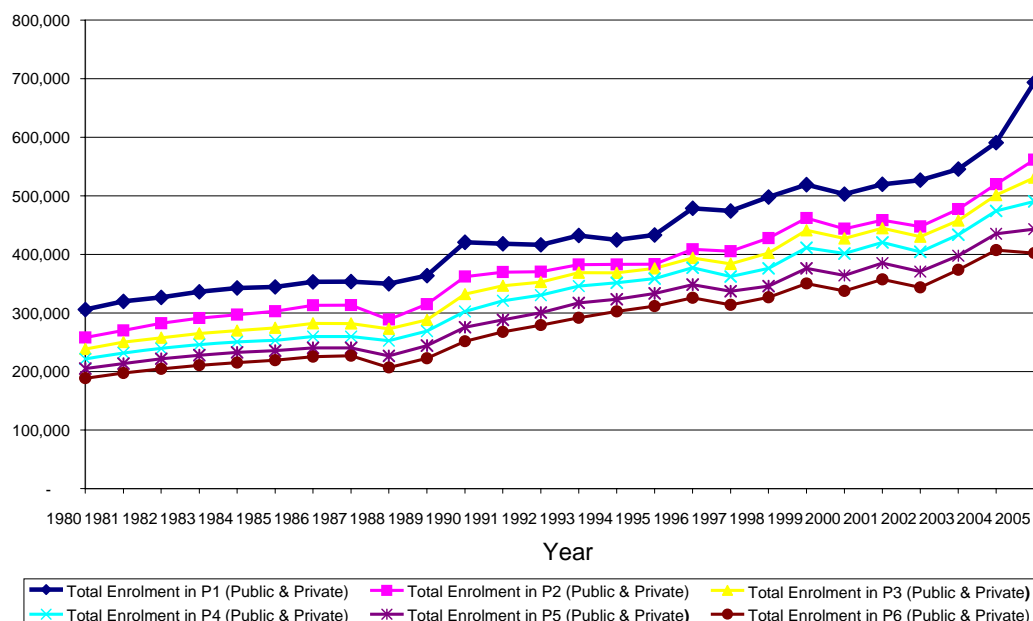
**Figure 15: Cohort tracking P5 in 2001- 2 to JSS3 in 2005-6**



(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

Turning our attention to enrolment trends over a twenty year period shows another side of enrolment trend in Ghana. Enrolment from 1980 to 2004 rose in absolute terms (see Figure 16), and although for both male and female pupils completion rates have improved (World Bank, 2004), the nature of transition and retention patterns have remained largely unchanged in primary grades over this period. The graph (Figure 16) shows a steady rise in enrolments by grade from 1980 to 2005. A big jump in enrolment occurs in 2005, presumably the result of the capitation grant scheme which effectively abolished all forms of direct fees. But as children progress through the grades, their number drops consistently. It remains to be seen whether the introduction of capitation will change this trend significantly. It would appear from this analysis that the real problem is not about getting more children officially enrolled (the evidence reviewed shows that access is improving), but rather, it is about reducing the leakage through drop out especially in the early grades (see Figure 10). Although Primary 1 (P1) entry enrolments have been rising steadily over the years, with a corresponding rise in the number completing a full cycle of primary education, the nature of enrolment patterns from grade to grade has basically not changed substantially.

**Figure 16: Evolution of Primary Enrolment (1980-2005)**



Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data

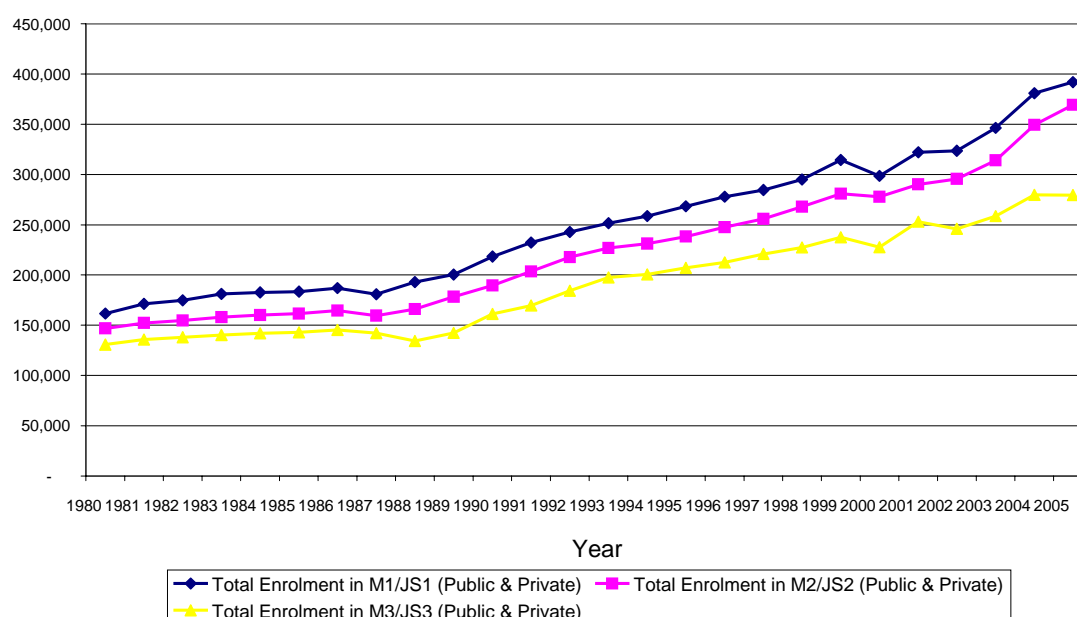
This once again points to the fundamental problem of system efficiency. Once children it appears schools are unable to keep many until they complete the full cycle of basic education. Overage enrolment appears to be a crucial factor, as we have pointed out, but school quality may be another. Fobih et al., (1999) found from their impact evaluation of World Bank support to primary school development programme in Ghana that schools were losing a lot of instructional time through teacher lateness and absenteeism. The recent World Bank (2004:44) impact evaluation study noted that “even where good school quality is achieved, educational outcomes, while improved, are still far from satisfactory ... improving them will indeed require attention to software”. In other words, reform attention has to shift towards improving school and classroom quality inputs if high enrolments in primary 1 are to be sustained throughout all grade level. If this happens, faith in the public school system especially in rural areas will return.

Pryor and Ampiah (2003) in an ethnographic study of understandings of education in a Ghanaian village noted that children dropped out or attended school infrequently because they felt the returns were low. Their study revealed that “most children do not follow schoolwork because they do not possess the understanding from previous work that is a prerequisite for the syllabus of the higher grades of primary school and junior secondary school” (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003:25). Tackling the school quality and efficiency problem is undoubtedly one important way of ensuring that high enrolments stay up all through the grades.

The profile of enrolment by grade for middle/JSS schooling system has not changed significantly in 25 years (see Figure 17) and if anything, drop out from JSS2 to JSS3 appears to be increasing.



**Figure 17: Enrolment by Grade (Middle/JSS)**



Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data

## Promotion, Repetition and Drop Out

According to the 2006 education sector performance report (MOESS, 2006), across all public primary grades the average rate of promotion, repetition and dropout is 91.0, 6.0 and 3.2 percent respectively. But the rates by grade vary considerably (see Tables 7 & 8). Grade 1 has the highest repetition and dropout rates, and the lowest promotion rates. Grades 2 to 5 show patterns of repetition ranging between 4 percent and 6 percent respectively each year, with an overall downward trend. Dropout is greatest in grade one, but peaks again in P4 and to a lesser extent P5. Promotion rates in P4 are also slightly down on the other grades. Grade 6 has the highest promotion and lowest drop out rates, which may be the result of the prospect of completing primary and entering JSS. There also might be some correlation with increased drop out and repetition in P4. Figures from the Education Sector Performance Report (MOESS, 2006) show that in general, for every 1000 children who entered grade 1, only 559 progressed through the primary school system to grade 6: 159 dropped out, while 283 of the children who remained in the schooling system had repeated at least one year of primary school. It would appear that the drop rates are under reported (Tables 7 and 8) as they are not consistent with the MOESS's analysis of about 559 children progressing through the primary cycle. CREATE will provide further data and analysis of this trend from the child tracking studies in the case study districts. Repetition is relatively high in Northern Ghana, particularly in Upper East and Upper West regions and among girls (see Table 9).

**Table 7: Public Primary Promotion, Repetition and Drop-out rates 2003-2004**

	<b>P 1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>
Promoters	80.9	93.1	92.5	90.6	93.1	95.0
Repeaters	9.8	6.8	6.2	5.5	4.8	5.1
Drop-out	9.3	0.1	1.3	3.9	2.2	0.0

(Source: MOESS, 2006)

**Table 8: Public Primary Promotion, Repetition and Drop-out rates 2004-2005**

	<b>P 1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>
Promoters	82.5	93.0	92.7	90.1	92.3	94.5
Repeaters	9.4	6.3	5.8	5.1	4.4	4.7
Drop-out	8.0	0.7	1.5	4.8	3.3	0.9

(Source: MOESS, 2006)

**Table 9: Repetition Rates and Trends: Public Primary Schools 2003-2005**

	2003-2004		2004-2005		2005-2006	
	Total repeaters as % of total	Female repeaters as % of female pupils	Total repeaters as % of total	Female repeaters as % of female pupils	Total repeaters as % of total	Female repeaters as % of female pupils
National	6.4	6.4	6.6	6.4	8.5	8.6
Deprived districts	6.0	6.0	7.0	6.8	8.0	8.1
Northern Region	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.0	8.6	9.0
Upper East	9.5	9.3	7.8	8.2	6.8	7.2
Upper West	11.8	12.2	11.0	11.0	19.1	19.8

(Source: MOESS, 2006)

## Out-of-School

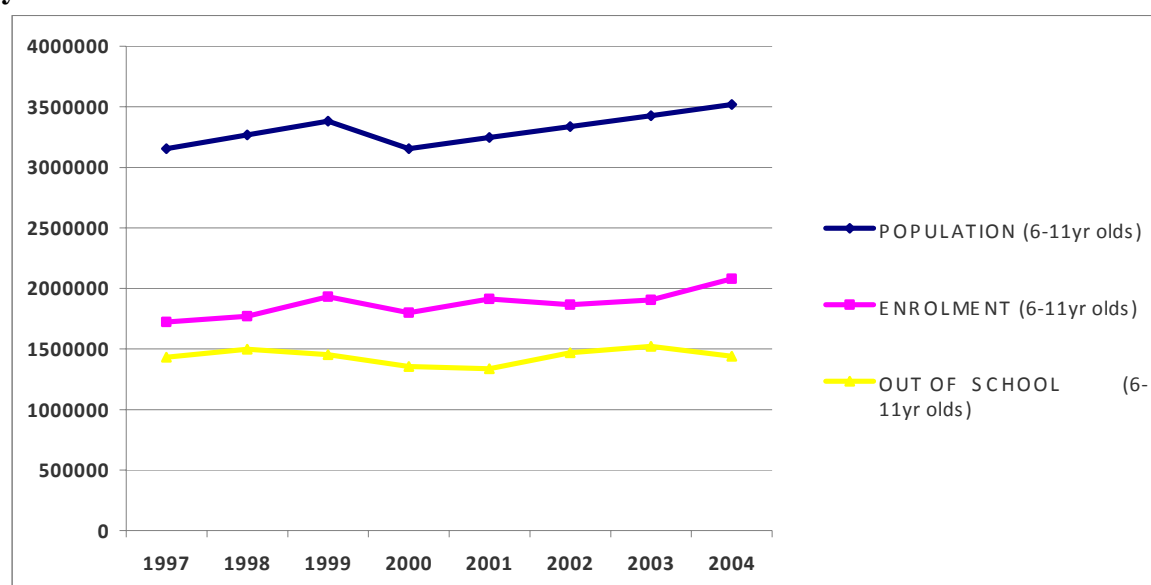
Determining the out of school population is dependent on which methods are used in the calculation. Besides there are errors that can either overstate or underestimate participation in school. There are three ways in which this can happen with enrolment data (UNESCO, 2005:14). Enrolment data can either:

- overstate participation by counting registered children who never attend school;
- underestimate participation by missing children who attend school without being registered; or
- underestimate participation when enrolment is counted at the beginning of the school year while some children register later in the school year.

In discussing out of school data it is important to know which method has been used to generate the data. School enrolment data can be determined using administrative data. This is the difference between the total number of children in the primary school-age population and the number of those children reported as enrolled in either primary or secondary. Second enrolment data can be determined using household survey data. This is the percentage of out of school children in the sampled school-age population which is then applied to the number of children of primary school age (see UNESCO, 2005).

Figure 18 shows the number of children of (around 1,500,000) who are out of school based on administrative data provided by EMIS. The population data appears too high and suggests a very high proportion of children who are out of school<sup>17</sup>. This appears to be inconsistent with other indicative analysis of enrolment trends of the 6 to 11 year olds based on household survey data. It could be due to possible errors in the population estimates or projection data. Besides, the calculation does not make a distinction between those who have never enrolled and those who enrolled but dropped out. What may be deduced from this data is that the structure of out of school children enrolment trend has not changed much from 1997 to 2004. Until accurate population estimates for out of school populations can be provided it will remain difficult to provide a highly reliable estimate. Some of these persistent questions around patterns of access and especially the out of school phenomenon will be investigated in more detail in CREATE fieldwork in Ghana.

**Figure 18: Population and enrolment of 6-11 years**



(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

<sup>17</sup> The 2008 Global Monitoring Report: EFA by 2015 – will we make it? estimates Ghana's out of school population to be around one million (see GMR 2008 page 65)

## Transition to Secondary

Recently, determination to expand access to post-basic education (i.e. beyond JSS, more specifically, SSS) has featured prominently in international discourse on educational access (Quist, 2003) and reflects a growing recognition that access to post-basic education encourages demand for basic education. In 1996, the World Bank noted that, “raising primary school enrolments in low-income developing countries is an important policy goal. But, achieving this goal requires more than simply improving access to primary schools. Because access to post-primary education is an important determinant of primary school enrolment, it is equally important to expand and improve access to middle and secondary schools” (World Bank, 1996:2)

Generally, the majority of children in Ghana who reach primary 6 continue to JSS as Table 10 indicates. A good number of those who enter junior secondary are able to complete. The story is a little different when it comes to entry into senior secondary (SSS). Here there is a significant drop. Transition rate (from JSS to SSS) is below fifty percent. Reformers in 1987 set the goal of reaching above 50% percent transition after the restructuring of the education system (MOEC, 1988). Although numbers accessing senior secondary has increased, still only about half of those successful in the JSS leaving exam continue to SSS. A substantial number of students each year fail to pass the JSS leaving exam (around 100,000 annually), leading to drop out and repetition.

**Table 10: Proportion of qualified JSS graduates gaining admission to SSS1 (2000/01-2004/05)**

JSS3 – SSS1						
Year	JSS 3 – total candidates presented	JSS3 – total qualified	% of candidates qualified	SSS1	Admission rate	Transition rate SSS1
2000/01	233786	141532	60.5	77704		0.33
2001/02	247699	149611	60.4	102891	0.73	0.42
2002/03	264977	160261	60.5	125245	0.84	0.47
2003/04	276814	169288	61.2	127542	-	0.48
2004/05	287297	177070	61.6	126462	-	0.46
P6 to JSS1						
Transition	2004/05	2005/06				
	Actual	Target				
P6-JSS1	92.9%	88.4%				

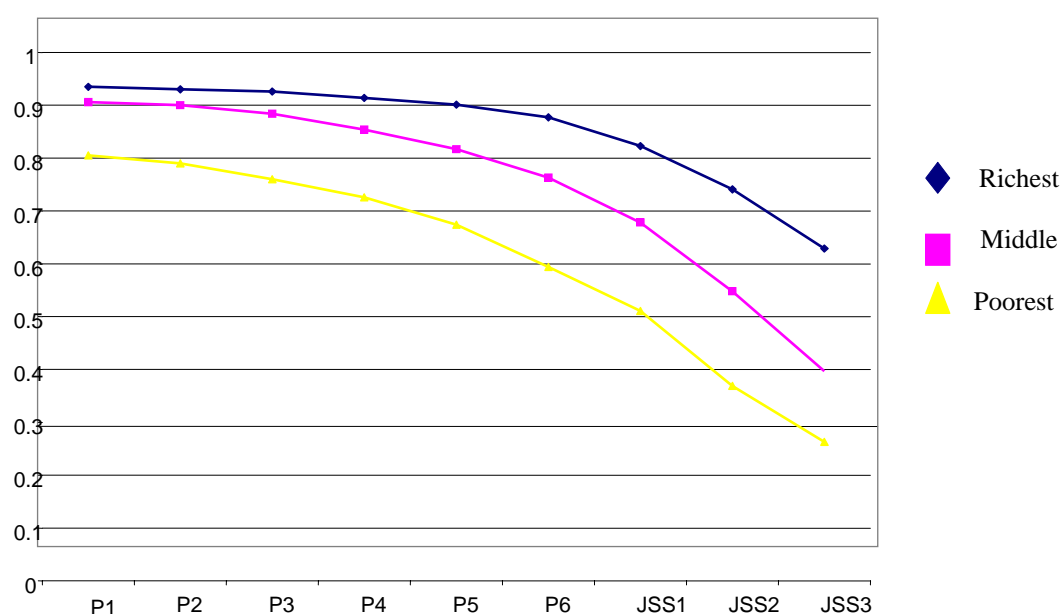
(Source: MOESS, 2006)

The World Bank (2004) study reported an average primary attendance rate of about 82 percent and JSS attendance rate of about 78.7 percent (both based on household survey data). Fobih et al., (1999) analyzed one year school attendance records of over 100 primary schools and found that primary attendance over a year averaged about an attendance of four out of five days – this is roughly the same (80 percent) as the estimated provided in the World Bank study based on 2003 data.

## Participation by Household Income

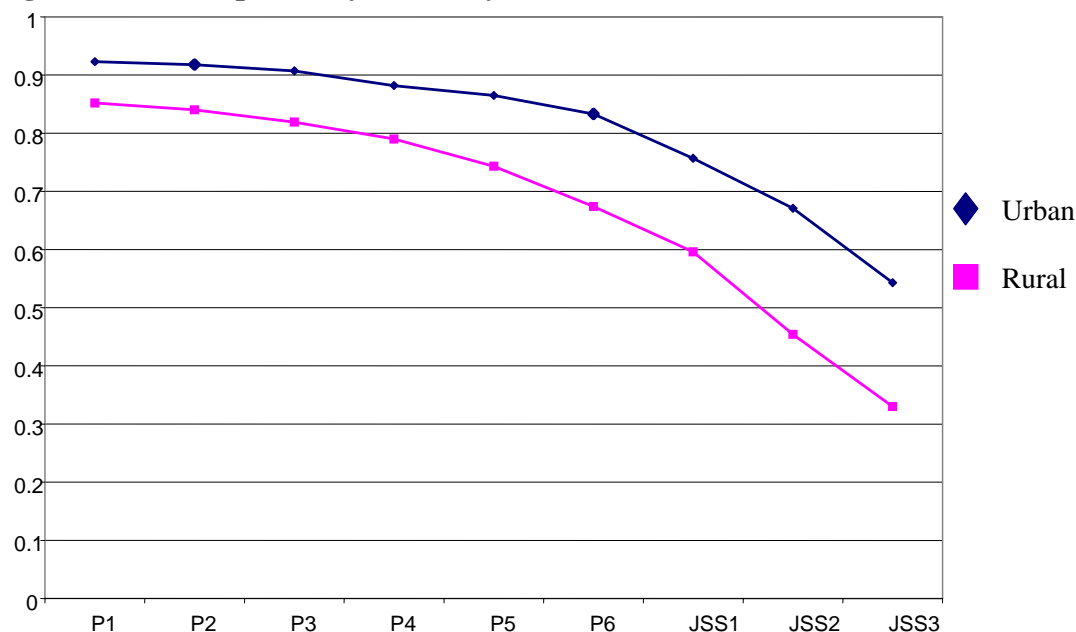
Analysis of participation by household income and rural/urban clearly indicates that children from poor households are less likely to continue their education to the secondary level (to JSS and SSS). Participation also depends on location (urban or rural dweller). Figure 19 shows participation in grade by household income, with richer households substantially more likely to access JSS (and subsequently SSS). Figure 20 shows access to JSS (and the later stages of primary) to be higher in urban compared with rural areas. Thus, demand for basic education may be much less for low *income* families living in rural areas who may weigh the opportunity costs and become less inclined to invest personal energy and resources into enrolling and keeping their children in school. Alternatively it may be that the costs to households represent much greater proportions of household income.

**Figure 19: Participation by Grade by Household Income**



(Source: derived from GSS, 2003b)

**Figure 20: Participation by Grade by Urban and Rural**



(Source: derived from GSS, 2003b)

### 3.3 Summary

The analysis of enrolment trends and patterns suggests that there are still some fundamental questions about access to basic education in Ghana that needs to be addressed through research and policy dialogue. The following questions are pertinent:

- What factors, especially among poor population groups determines which children enroll, attend regularly, complete basic education, and make a successful transition to senior secondary?
- Why have patterns of access, participation and completion continued to follow a slow trend of improvement as the analysis in this section has indicated? In particular, it is important to know whether high repetition at grade 1 continues to be partly due to the presence of the underage children and/or is simply the result of school's inability to offer effective instruction for all children. It is also important to establish and act to ameliorate factors that are closely associated with drop out.
- Why is it, as it appears, that next to grade 1, soon after grade 4 drop out increases? What are the precursors of this rise in dropout after it would seem drop out reduces considerably by grade 3?
- Why is there such a high proportion of school-age children out of school and why has it not been reduced significantly over the years?

Providing answers to these questions will require investigations at the school-community level where pathways and processes of access and participation in basic schools can be studied more intensively.

## 4. Mapping the Zones of Exclusion

### 4.1 Introduction

The World Bank study on access to basic education in Ghana defined access as “the ability of children to progress through the basic education cycle ... without delay or drop out. This means enrolling in primary school at age six and completing three year junior secondary school at age fourteen” (Chao and Alper, 1998) Similarly the CREATE programme puts forward the idea of children gaining ‘meaningful access’ to education, which insists on quality of provision and valued learning outcomes. Thus, access in these respects means much more than getting children registered in schools. It is about ensuring that children who enroll attend regularly and complete a full cycle of basic education and achieve good learning outcomes.

In this report access to basic education is conceptualized around four zones of exclusion rather than the six as recently conceptualized (see Appendix 4).

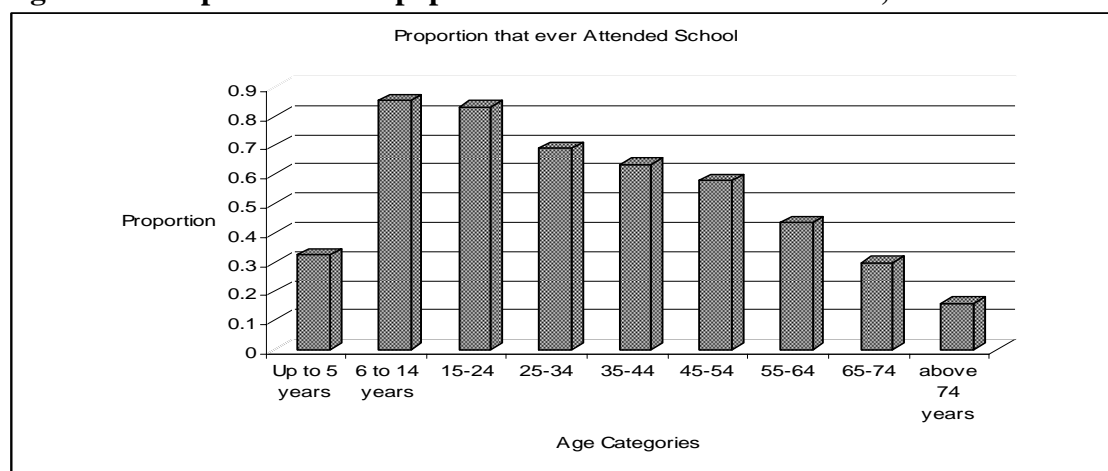
The identification of the *proportion* and *characteristics* of children in each of the exclusion zones is based on data from the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire Survey (CWIQ) conducted by the Ghana Statistical Survey in 2003. This is a national household survey (HHS) of all 110 districts at the time (currently there are 138 districts). The CWIQ survey has 12 modules and collects data on household structure, employment, education, health etc. A major difference between the CWIQ and the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) questionnaires is that it does not have an income module. Also, the expenditure module may at best be described as rudimentary, and not geared towards obtaining information on household consumption expenditure. A second source of education data is the EMIS of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. The EMIS collects data from schools and contains information on enrolments by grade, number of teaching staff, qualification of teaching staff etc.

An advantage of the CWIQ is that it is possible to obtain information on the characteristics of children identified in the different zones of exclusion. It is also possible to obtain estimates of enrolment rates. However, since it is a sample survey and not a census, there are always margins of error around the estimates. Also, its coverage of schools in the country is less than 100 percent. EMIS does not collect socioeconomic data on the children enrolled in school. Population projections use the 2000 population census for the age-groups, thus subjecting estimates using this data source to some error. As noted, estimates of enrolment rates from the data sources are likely to be different largely because of the sources of error associated with the population estimates. Secondly, the household survey may contain errors if respondents do not answer questions accurately, either because questions are misunderstood, or because of a desire to conceal or manipulate information.

An indicator of trends in participation in education is the proportion of the population classified by age-group that has ever attended school. This is a crude measure of participation because it includes those who entered but did not complete basic education and does not provide any information on the current level of education attained for those still in school. Using this measure it is observed that there has been

an increase in the proportion of the population that has participated in education in Ghana in the last fifty or so years (see Section 2).

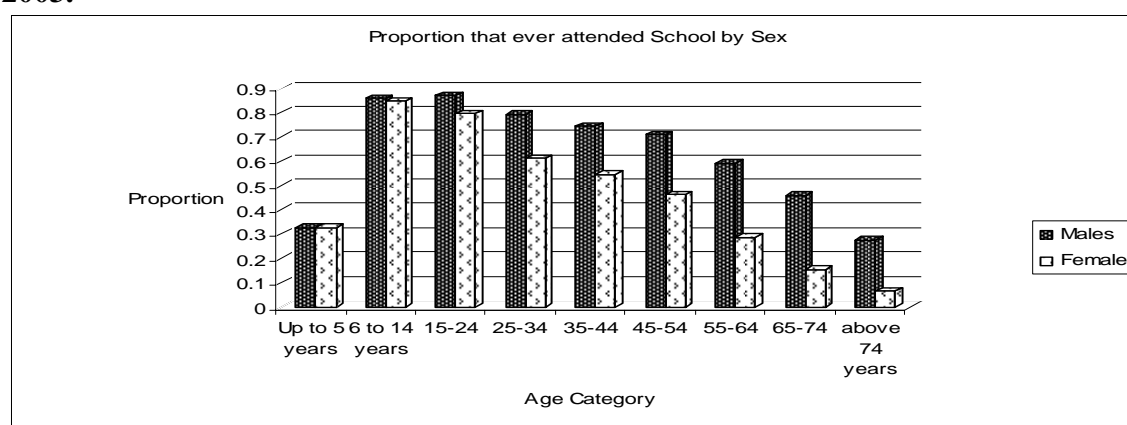
**Figure 21: Proportion of the population that has attended school, 2003**



(Source: GSS, 2003a)

Figure 21 provides information on the proportion of the population that has attended school at some stage in their lives. It shows that the younger age cohort (with the exception of those aged 5 years and less) is more likely to have attended school at some stage, with this proportion decreasing as the age increases. This improvement in participation in education applies to both sexes, and goes alongside a significant reduction in the gender gap. The difference between the sexes in the proportion that has attended school at some stage is insignificant for the population aged 6-14 years, as indicated in Figure 22).

**Figure 22: Proportion of population that has attended school by gender, 2003.**

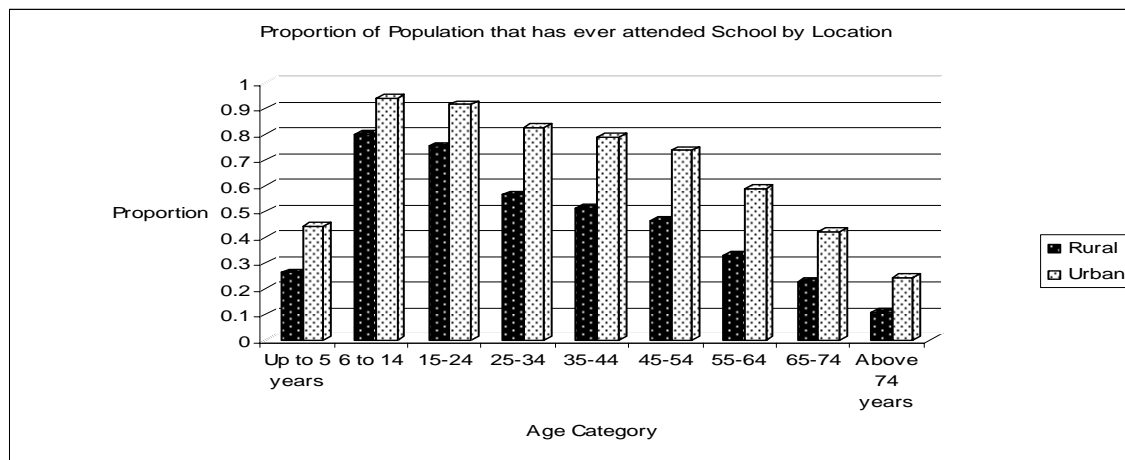


(Source: GSS, 2003a)

The urban-rural gap still persists, although there has been some narrowing of the gap in the last two decades. Figure 23 provides information on the proportion of the population that has attended school by location. It indicates that people in urban areas are more likely to attend or to have attended school, although this differential gap is lessening, as the World Bank (2004) impact evaluation study had revealed (see Section 2).



**Figure 23: Proportion of the population that have attended school by location, 2003**



(Source: GSS, 2003a)

#### 4.2 Zone 1: Children who have never attended school

Approximately 15 percent of the population of Ghana aged 6-14 years and 17 percent of the population aged 15 to 24 years had never attended school according to figures taken in 2003 (see Table 11). The difference between boys (86 percent) and girls (85 percent) is not significant for the 6-14 year age group. However, this difference widens to 7 percentage points for the 15-24 year age group, and is evidence of recent changing patterns of access. In particular it highlights widening educational opportunities for girls, as the proportion of boys who have never attended school is not significantly different between the two age groups.

There is a significant urban-rural gap for both age groups. Only 6 percent of urban children in the 6-14 age group had never attended school by 2003 compared to 20 percent of rural children. This would suggest that the bulk of the problem around zone one access is located in rural areas. Location also interacts with gender, as evidence shows that girls in rural households are more likely never to have attended school than girls in urban locations. The gender gap for urban children between 6-14 years is not significant, but becomes significant for urban population aged 15-24 years (see Table 12), i.e. after junior secondary. The national average masks wide regional variations. The proportion of the population that has never attended school amongst the age-group 6-14 years ranges from a mean of 5% in the Greater Accra region to a mean of 43% in the Northern Region. Amongst the population aged 15-24 years the mean ranges from 5% in the Greater Accra Region to 54% in the Northern Region (Table 11). Clearly, what this suggests is that location is important in any attempt to understand why some children never enroll. The North, for example, suffers increased economic and social deprivation compared to the South. However, it also indicates that access to schooling is improving for children in the Northern Region.

**Table 11: Estimates of proportion of the population who have never attended school**

	6 to 14 years	15-24 years		6 to 14 years	15-24 years
All	0.15	0.17	First Quintile		
Male	0.14	0.13	All	0.33	0.36
Female	0.15	0.20	Boys	0.32	0.32
Rural	0.20	0.25	Girls	0.35	0.41
Male	0.19	0.20	Second Quintile		
Female	0.21	0.29	All	0.12	0.16
Urban	0.06	0.08	Boys	0.11	0.11
Male	0.05	0.05	Girls	0.13	0.21
Female	0.07	0.12	Third Quintile		
Region			All	0.08	0.11
Western	0.08	0.13	Boys	0.07	0.07
Central	0.07	0.10	Girls	0.09	0.16
Greater Accra	0.05	0.05	Fourth Quintile		
Volta	0.18	0.16	All	0.06	0.10
Eastern	0.08	0.10	Boys	0.05	0.05
Ashanti	0.06	0.09	Girls	0.07	0.15
Brong Ahafo	0.12	0.17	Fifth Quintile		
Northern	0.43	0.54	All	0.06	0.12
Upper East	0.35	0.45	Boys	0.05	0.06
Upper West	0.40	0.45	Girls	0.07	0.15

(Source: GSS, 2003a)

The welfare of the households<sup>18</sup> appears to be a significant determinant of whether a child has ever been to school (Table 11). Similarly, in all welfare quintiles the proportion of girls that have never attended school increases significantly between the two age cohorts. In contrast there is no statistical difference between the proportions of boys that have never attended school between the two age-groups. For both age cohorts there is an appreciable change in the size of the gender gap amongst the welfare quintiles. This suggests the probable strong influence of socio-cultural factors in explaining access of girls to education, but it also indicates improvements to girls' access.

### 4.3 Zone 2: Children who drop out of school

In this section Zone Two children, i.e. those who have dropped out of school, will be discussed. By drop out we mean children who have attended school, but no longer currently attend, although it is possible these children may re-enter at some stage. Data from CWIQ in 2003 indicates that the problem of drop out is important in Ghana, but varies for different population groups. Approximately 1 percent of children aged 6-11 years had dropped out of school in 2003. This figure is low and may be due to the fact that it is not based on actual population/administrative drop out

<sup>18</sup>The welfare measure estimated by the Ghana Statistical Service is based on variables that are close correlates of poverty. The poverty correlates that make up the welfare measure include household expenditure based on five key items, an asset score based on the ownership of eight different items, a dependency variable (the latter was included only for the rural estimates of the welfare measure), an ecological zone indicator and indicators of dwelling amenities.

data. The proportion rose to 3.5 percent for children aged 12-14, and 17 percent for the population aged 15-17 (see Table 12). EMIS data estimates a primary school population survival rate of about 83 percent for the years 2004/2005. Overall, drop outs appear to be quite low, but this may due to the fact that the CWIQ is survey and not census based. The importance of these figures lies with what they reveal through comparisons across location, welfare and gender.

**Table 12: Proportion of children who have dropped out of school**

	Age 6-11 years	Age 12-14 years	Age 15-17 years
All	0.010	0.035	0.176
Rural	0.011	0.037	0.182
Urban	0.009	0.031	0.169
Boys	0.011	0.032	0.159
Girls	0.009	0.038	0.194
Welfare Quintile			
Lowest	0.012	0.040	0.139
Second	0.011	0.036	0.188
Third	0.009	0.037	0.183
Fourth	0.008	0.027	0.181
Highest	0.008	0.029	0.203
Region			
Western	0.008	0.037	0.181
Central	0.018	0.035	0.193
Greater Accra	0.011	0.026	0.148
Volta	0.012	0.050	0.178
Eastern	0.009	0.042	0.209
Ashanti	0.009	0.036	0.249
Brong Ahafo	0.006	0.030	0.171
Northern	0.009	0.028	0.056
Upper East	0.010	0.018	0.095
Upper West	0.012	0.034	0.105

(Source: GSS, 2003a)

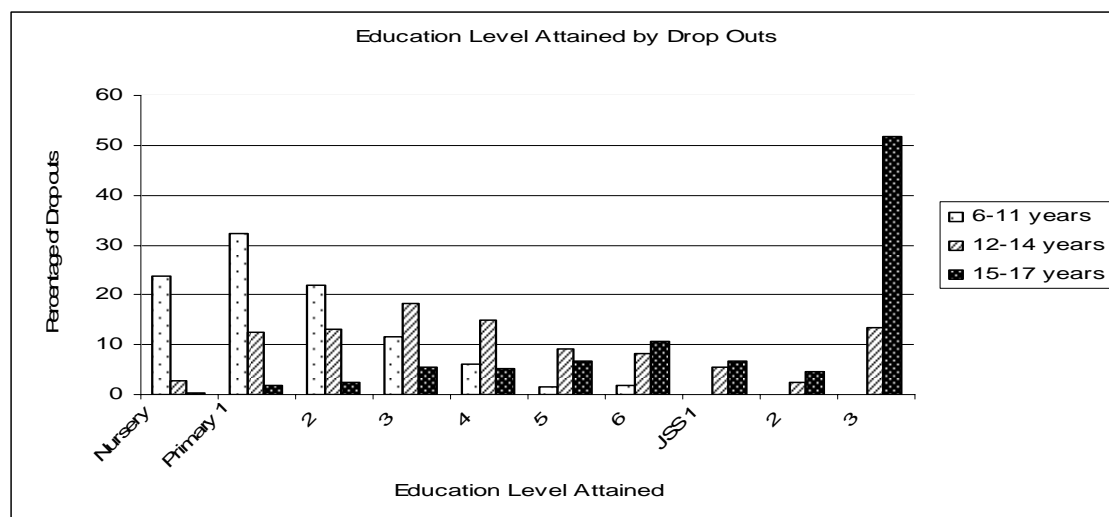
The proportion of rural children who had dropped out of school by 2003 was higher than the proportion of urban children, although the difference was not statistically significant. The incidence of dropping out was higher amongst girls than it was amongst boys. Table 12 suggests that the probability of children dropping out of school increases with age, with the increase greater for girls than boys. Older girls are more likely to drop out than older boys.

The effect of welfare on the drop out rate is not the same across the different age cohorts. Amongst children aged 6-11 years there is a positive relationship between dropping out and welfare indicators. A similar pattern holds for the 12-14 year age group. However, for children aged 15-17 years, it would appear that the relationship is reversed, i.e. children from high welfare quintile are more likely to drop out from school. This might be because more children from this quintile are actually still in school at this stage than other socio-economic groups, leading to the possibility of higher drop out rates.

Estimates from the CWIQ data (GSS, 2003a) suggest that more than 30% of children aged 6-11 years who dropped out of school did so after completing primary 1. This is consistent with drop out trends discussed in Section 3. The next point at which children's risk of dropping out increases is at grade 4, with the risk higher for girls than boys. Fewer than 2% of drop outs aged 6-11 had completed primary 6 (see Figure 24). Amongst children aged 12-14 years who had dropped out, fewer than half

had completed primary 4. Approximately 13% of drop outs in this age group completed JSS3 before dropping out. Amongst drop outs aged 15-17 years, about 52% had ended their education at the end of JSS3 (see Figure 24). These figures also indicate the possibility of high repetition rates between grades and/or late enrolments (see Section 3).

**Figure 24: Distribution of children who have dropped out of school by education level attained**



(Source: GSS, 2003a)

A number of factors are thought to be important in terms of influencing drop out before the end of the basic education cycle. These include: the age at which a child starts school (with overage entries thought more likely to drop out as pressure to enter adult life and the workplace is increasing); low attainment; high absence; and high repetition rates.

## Reasons for not Attending School<sup>19</sup>

### Children Aged 6-11

The CWIQ elicits information on why children dropped out and are no longer in school Table 13 gives some summary information which will be explored in more detail.

The most frequently given reasons given by children aged 6-11 years not to be in school was that it was either too expensive or school was uninteresting or useless. The proportion of children who were not in school because it was considered too expensive was higher amongst urban than for rural children. On the other hand the proportion of children who were not in school because it was perceived to be unnecessary or uninteresting was higher amongst rural rather than urban children. There may be reasons behind these responses. Attending school in urban communities may be more expensive because of transportation costs, and because urban schools may have additional non-tuition fees that are not found in rural schools. The more frequent response that schooling is unnecessary or irrelevant amongst rural children

<sup>19</sup> This data includes those who never attended and those who attended but dropped out

may be suggestive of the poor quality of education in rural schools, and the possible limited relevance of the school curriculum to the needs of the rural population (see Pryor & Ampiah, 2003).

**Table 13: Reasons why children are currently not in school, 2003**

Reasons why child aged 6-11 is not in school								
	Quintile							
	All	Rural	Urban	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Not of school age	1.48	2.29	0.00	1.34	3.94	0.00	0.00	0.00
Completed school	0.58	0.59	0.53	0.00	2.14	0.00	0.00	0.00
School too far away	5.13	7.24	0.89	8.93	2.68	5.69	2.36	2.55
Too expensive	41.50	34.79	54.96	28.61	47.71	46.58	43.82	52.85
Working	4.80	5.08	4.24	5.95	4.86	3.88	5.07	2.32
Apprentice	0.72	1.01	0.01	1.01	0.73	0.26	0.00	1.63
School useless/uninteresting	34.58	38.34	27.03	45.31	25.30	34.28	30.66	31.89
Illness	5.35	5.53	4.99	4.76	6.86	5.03	7.20	1.11
Having a child/Pregnant	0.43	0.40	0.50	0.85	0.62	0.00	0.00	0.00
Got Married	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Failed exam	0.87	0.67	1.26	0.41	0.00	1.75	3.68	0.00
Other	8.97	11.14	4.63	11.66	9.61	7.63	2.67	9.94

Reasons why child aged 12-14 is not in school								
	Quintile							
	All	Rural	Urban	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Not of school age	0.37	0.50	0.00	0.70	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00
Completed school	9.61	7.70	12.91	7.18	11.21	9.55	13.85	5.91
School too far away	2.38	3.75	0.00	4.09	2.14	2.72	0.00	1.22
Too expensive	29.65	26.34	35.35	33.56	23.98	32.42	20.45	40.34
Working	5.90	8.36	1.63	10.22	5.11	4.40	5.12	1.54
Apprentice	6.01	6.18	5.71	7.97	5.97	6.42	2.34	5.41
School useless/uninteresting	44.26	47.94	37.87	42.49	48.37	40.72	46.29	43.81
Illness	4.71	6.00	2.48	4.19	6.03	2.98	6.68	3.99
Having a child/Pregnant	1.91	1.11	3.25	0.41	2.31	3.21	3.09	0.00
Got Married	0.35	0.44	0.17	0.25	0.36	0.79	0.00	0.00
Failed exam	4.12	3.58	5.03	3.29	3.59	4.03	4.26	7.43
Other	4.30	3.99	4.82	3.84	3.61	4.61	0.70	11.36

(Source: GSS, 2003a)

The third most frequent reason given why children aged 6-11 years were not in school was illness and 'other' reasons. Less than 1% children cited distance as a reason compared to 7% of rural children, indicating that distance to and from school might be more critical issues in rural areas. However, the proportion of households residing less than half an hour from the nearest primary school is much lower in rural compared to urban communities (see Table 14). Analysis of the determinants of attending school and school attainment find distance to the nearest primary school significant in explaining both (Chao and Alper, 1998).

Illness was the reason why about 5 percent of children were no longer in school, which may imply in some cases that this absence from school may have been temporary.

**Table 14: Distance to the nearest primary school**

	Rural	Urban
0-14 minutes	67.13	72.81
15-29 minutes	16.39	21.28
30-44 minutes	8.35	4.96
45-59 minutes	3.27	6.7
60 minutes and over	4.83	3.26

(Source: GSS, 2003a)

Children from the lowest welfare quintile were more likely not to be in school because it was considered useless or uninteresting (Table 13). The high cost of education was given by households of children in the higher welfare quintiles as the main reason children were not in school. This evidence would seem to suggest that whilst the concerns from households with children in the lowest welfare quintiles were to do with quality and relevance of education, households in the higher welfare quintiles were more concerned with the cost of education. This may be seen as surprising, given that higher welfare quintiles would be more likely to be in the position to afford the costs. It may be that their children attend much higher cost schools. Yet it might also indicate a more ready acceptance of the importance of education.

### **Children Aged 12-14 years**

The two major reasons given for why children aged 12-14 years are no longer in school are the same as those for children aged 6-11 i.e. the costs of education and the lack of perceived interest in education (see Table 13). Some of the other categories differed slightly though. More importantly in this age range an increased number of children were not in school because they were seen to have completed their education, were working or carrying out apprenticeships. This implies increased pressures on children to get involved in the labour market as they get older. Illness and exam failure were also reasons given for children not to be in school.

### **4.4 Zone 3: Children at risk of dropping out from schooling**

A number of interlocking in-school factors are thought to increase a child's likelihood of dropping out and as such make children at risk of leaving school before completing a cycle of basic education. These include: low attendance, low attainment, and grade repetition. These factors interact with other socio-economic, household and context-specific features which also influence whether a child remains in school.

Irregular school attendance can hinder a child's ability to achieve the learning outcomes expected of schooling. There is no national data on the frequency of school attendance in Ghana. However, case studies conducted in three districts in 2004 (National Development Planning Commission/UNDP, 2004a, b and c) suggest the phenomena of interrupted school attendance may be widespread (see Table 15). The incidence of irregular school attendance for children aged 3-18 years ranged from about 7% in Atwima district, to 12% in Builsa district and 18% in the Tema Municipality. Most of the children had temporarily withdrawn from school more than once over a twelve month period. In Tema and Atwima the most frequently given

reason why children were not attending school regularly was difficulty in paying fees. In Builsa, the demand for child labour on farms was the most frequently provided reason. A lack of interest in school was seen to be a particular problem in Atwima. Illness was an important factor in withdrawal from schooling; this was especially the case in Builsa and Atwima.

**Table 15: Regularity of school attendance in three districts of Ghana**

	Tema	Atwima	Builsa
% of children aged 3-18 years withdrawn from school	18.26	6.83	11.48
Number of times withdrawn in past year			
Once	12.1	34.9	38.2
Twice	19.7	20.9	44.1
Three times	16.7	4.7	2.9
Several times	51.5	39.5	14.7
Reasons for withdrawal			
Illness	6.4	22.2	35.3
Needed on farm/shop	0.0	0.0	50.0
Could not pay fees	84.1	37.2	5.9
Marriage	0.0	2.2	0.0
Student not interested	4.8	26.7	5.9
No need for education	3.2	6.7	7.3
Other	1.6	4.4	2.9

(Source: National Development Planning Commission/UNDP, 2004a, b and c)

The fact that in Tema (an industrial township) children were stating fees as the reason for irregular attendance may suggest that either these schools were charging higher fees than in a typical rural area or the indirect costs are too high for families.

A study reported in the 2006 ESP report (MOESS, 2006) had noted that in one particular district (Amansie West) about 24 percent of pupils in primary and 19 percent in JSS had difficulties acquiring exercise books for school. Many also were attending school without sandals, decent school uniforms and there were indications that some were malnourished (MOESS, 2006:54). These are factors that undermine regular attendance and eventually lead to drop out. It is how schools and their management respond to these challenges that can make the difference to whether a child stays or leaves school.

Participatory poverty assessments suggest that rural households expect their children to be able to read and write (Norton et al., 1995). Criterion referenced tests administered to primary six pupils revealed that the majority of public school pupils, particularly pupils in rural schools lacked mastery of the English Language and mathematics. Since most subjects are taught in English it is unsurprising that rural children say school is uninteresting. A significant proportion of children aged 15-17 years drop out of school for apprenticeship training. This raises issues about the relevance of the basic education curriculum. Why are children opting out of the formal education system to learn carpentry, masonry and dressmaking, when there are vocational arts and technical skills programmes at junior secondary school level meant to offer basic knowledge and skills in these practical subjects? What it might

indicate is a lack of belief in basic education that is of poor quality and perceived to be irrelevant to life chances. The World Bank (2004) administered literacy and numeracy tests revealed that nearly half (46 percent) of children who have completed grades 3-6 scored 5 or less on a simple English test, “meaning they were barely literate and one-fifth (19 percent) scored 2 or less, i.e. the same as guessing, and so are illiterate” (World Bank, 2004:35).

#### 4.5 Zone 4: Children who complete primary but not junior secondary school

The education reforms of 1987 introduced the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which effectively screened pupils at the end of basic education. Thus, transition from primary to JSS is less problematic than that between JSS to SSS. Of the sub-population aged 12-14 years about 30 percent of children who had completed primary school managed to continue to junior secondary (see Table 16). Of children aged 15-17 years, there is a significant increase in the proportion that complete primary school but do not continue to junior secondary.

As a result of late entry most of the population aged 12-14 years is still in primary school. This can partly explain the extremely low proportion of children aged 12-14 years in the Northern and Upper East regions who did not continue their education after completing primary 6.

**Table 16: Percentage of children aged 12-14 years who ended schooling at primary 6.**

	All	Boys	Girls
All	0.28	0.31	0.24
Rural	0.30	0.37	0.22
Urban	0.24	0.21	0.27
Welfare Quintile	Region		
First	0.34	Western	0.35
Second	0.25	Central	0.31
Third	0.27	Greater Accra	0.22
Fourth	0.29	Volta	0.37
Fifth	0.18	Eastern	0.32
		Ashanti	0.30
		Brong-Ahafo	0.30
		Northern	0.09
		Upper East	0.04
		Upper West	0.38

(Source: GSS, 2003a4.6 Summary of key issues)

The 2003 CWIQ data and other enrolment analysis (see Section 3) reveals that access to basic education in Ghana is not available to quite a significant proportion of the population aged 6-17 years who have never attended school, enrolled late, or had attended irregularly, probably as many as 15 percent. There is also a relatively high drop out rate amongst the population group aged 15-17 years, and similarly high non-completion of the basic education cycle. All these characteristics, with the exception of irregular attendance at school are summarized in Figure 25. In particular, it would suggest that on average about 15 percent of children never attend school in Ghana.



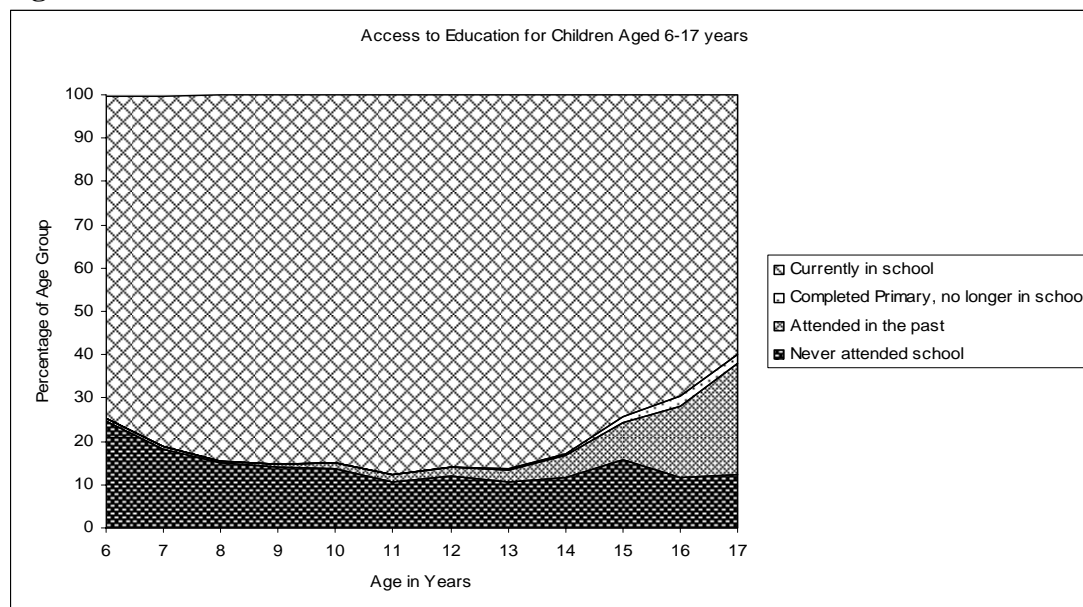
General conclusions from the analysis and some implications for research are as follows:

- Evidence from the 2003 CWIQ survey would suggest that over time there has been a slight reduction in the incidence of late entry, but that the phenomenon still persists and invites research.
- The gender gap at entry, net enrolment and drop out rate is not significant amongst the population aged 6-11 years. Differences in enrolment amongst the sexes emerge after age 11, and the evidence would suggest that in some cases the effect of the gender gap manifests itself in terms of lower net enrolment rate for boys compared to that of girls. Net enrolment rates amongst girls in urban locations are higher than those for boys
- Access to basic education in rural communities still remains lower than in urban communities. In addition, access indicators are much worse in the three northern regions than the rest of the country.
- The welfare of the household is an important determinant of access to education, although the relationship between the different dimensions of access and the welfare measures used is not always as expected i.e. wealthier households often cite costs as the reason for children not in school, though they have more capacity to pay. Participation in JSS and SSS is much higher for wealthier families and because costs are higher at secondary education level, they are more likely to view rising costs as a barrier to access.

The analysis of the zones of exclusion reveals that a significant proportion of the attrition from formal education occurs in primary 1 amongst the population aged 6-11 years. The current introduction of the capitation grant policy has, according to the MOESS, increased enrolment into primary one although indications (see MOESS, 2006) are that the sharp rise in enrolment may not be sustainable.

- The introduction of the capitation grant has also created those conditions that might increase drop out, i.e. crowded classrooms and increased teacher workload as a result of rapid enrolment growth.
- At primary school age, not all physically or mentally challenged children are at a disadvantage. Net enrolment rates amongst children that are sight challenged are higher than the national average. This may be explained by the provision of education facilities for children with sight problems. Provision of facilities supportive of children with other disabilities could increase the chances of them progressing through basic education and eventually senior secondary education. Here too, it is important that teachers in particular have training in identifying children who may have learning or other forms of disability. If teachers have no such training, then it is very likely they will not respond sensitively to pupils who are finding school difficult because of their special needs and circumstances.

**Figure 25: Characteristics of Access to Education in Ghana2003**



(Source: GSS, 2003a)

- Rigorous econometric analysis has been conducted in the past using data from the four household surveys to investigate the determinants of the demand for schooling. In the period since 1998/99, when the fourth household survey was conducted there has been an increase in the number of schools that have been established. Programmes have been intensified to encourage girls to attend and remain in school. The economy has experienced continuous growth at between 4-5 percent annually. It is therefore necessary to investigate how these changes have impacted on the demand for basic education.
- A frequently cited reason why children are no longer in school is that they find it *uninteresting* and *irrelevant*. This was a reason mostly cited by rural children. If access to education is to be improved amongst rural children it is necessary to investigate more deeply what this means and what schools could do in response to this charge. We need to research what rural households expect from basic education?
- The recent policy focus has been on encouraging the girl child to go to school. If the patterns emerging from the CWIQ 2003 are new trends, then it is important that a rigorous gender analysis of access to education is conducted – i.e. the focus of the analysis should not only be on the girl child, but also to investigate the different patterns of access amongst boys and girls for different age cohorts and in different locations.

## **5. Review of Access Related Research in Ghana**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This section reviews some of the research on access to basic education in Ghana. Access to education is a complex process, involving a range of interacting demand and supply-side factors. It is difficult to attribute access, non-access and the spaces in-between to one or two specific factors, rather access should be seen as a process with a wealth of overlapping determinants, often in flux. However it is important to retain an awareness of the complexities of access, and the range of interlocking determinants. This section covers a range of topics linked to educational access: health; disability; HIV/AIDS; households; migration; child labour; educational costs; geographical differences and divisions; gender and access; supply of schools; teachers; non state providers; and schooling practices.

### **5.2 Exploring access issues**

#### **5.2.1 Health, nutrition and access to schooling**

Studies have looked at children's health in Ghana, and many health problems identified have potential implications on schooling (Pridmore, 2007). Research by the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC: 2000) found that in total a little over 16 percent of school-age children surveyed suffered from recurring health problems. Of those indicating health problems 22 percent cited headache, 28 percent malaria/fever 19 percent stomach disorder and 31 percent other ailments. Research by Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001) in the Eastern Region, revealed that 70 percent of all primary school-age children were anemic. Sarris and Shams (1991) studied malnutrition among school age children in Ghana and found that about 36 percent of children surveyed were malnourished. Most weighed below the 80 percent Harvard weight-for-age standard. The GNCC survey (2000) also reported that only about a third (29%) of children ate meals with protein. The research indicates that in general malnutrition is higher in the northern Ghana (Sarris and Shams, 1991) where socio-economic indicators are low. In these regions enrolments, attendance and completion rates tend to be lower. Fentiman et al., (2001) research indicates the importance of livelihoods to nutrition with young children from farming communities significantly more undernourished than children from fishing communities.

Health has the potential to affect access to schooling. Research indicates a child's health can influence when and whether they go to school, their functioning in school and how long they are expected to stay in school (similarly the health of school teachers is an important factor in whether teacher attendance and the types of interactions which take place in classrooms). Research in Ghana indicates a correlation between malnutrition, stunted growth and delayed enrolment in school (Glewwe and Jacoby, 1995; Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999, 2001). Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy (1999, 2001) matched 65 in-school boys and 65 in-school girls by age (6-7 years) and sex with 65 out-of-school children and found that; those who were not enrolled in primary school were significantly shorter and more stunted than those enrolled children. A further 65 boys and 65 girls who were over-age enrollers to primary school were also surveyed in this study; these children were significantly more stunted than children in school at the correct age. In focus group discussions and

interviews, parents were asked why their school-age children had not been sent to school. Some parents indicated their children were too young or not yet 'grown,' something Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy (1999:340) put down to a combination of poor physical development and lack of social/cognitive skills. It indicates though that health factors, rather than age, can be determinants of when a child goes to school. Indeed research indicates a difference in health status of enrolled and non-enrolled children, with out-of-school children often more vulnerable to health problems.

A child's health status affects how they function at school. Children who suffer from malnutrition, hunger, or who lack certain micronutrients do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children (Pridmore, 2007:21). Children who were over-age for their grade in junior secondary school in Eastern Region, according to research by Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001), had encountered significant health problems, probably the result of poor health in infancy and early childhood.

Studies also indicate that health status has implications for attendance, retention and drop out. Again, research by Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy (1999, 2001) suggests that hunger, malaria, headaches and poor eyesight were major causes of absenteeism and dropping out. Health issues were also often gendered, with girls reporting more health-related problems than boys. Painful menstruation, a lack of sanitary facilities and pregnancy were factors leading to both absenteeism and drop-out of adolescent girls (Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999, 2001).

Fentiman, Hall & Bundy (2001) suggest that health inputs should be targeted towards infants and the first years of primary schooling, 'if interventions are targeted at this stage, enrolment levels rise and the majority of children are reached'. This should be complemented by gender-sensitive programmes that focus on female adolescent health and specific strategies to reach out to those most at risk. Food aid and school feeding programmes have been promoted to encourage educational access, but are as yet a relatively under-researched area (Pridmore, 2007:22). Seidu (2003) investigated the impact of food aid intervention on girls' enrolment, attendance and retention in schools in the East Gonja District of Northern Ghana. He found that although respondents perceived food aid as an incentive for girls to enrol, attend and remain in school till completion, the most important factor was the awareness of the importance and benefits of girls' education. The study found no statistically significant difference in enrolment before and after food aid. This finding raises questions about the wisdom of investing heavily in school feeding programmes as a way of improving access without attending to other factors, especially health related ones.

### **5.2.2 Disability, special educational needs and access**

It is estimated that around 5 percent of the population of Ghana have some sort of disability (Annor, 2002), with sight problems noted as most prevalent (around 59 percent), then hearing/speaking. However, disclosure of disability might be problematic, with a possible under-recording of disability in rural areas (Annor, 2002), making disability a sometimes less-visible factor in educational access. In this section we look at available research in this area, specifically looking at whether children with disabilities have access and the contexts of access and non-access.

Thurman (2003) studied children with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN) in Ghana and found problems included vision; hearing; motion; feeling (sensory); fits (epilepsy), learning difficulties and other disabilities. Thurman (2003) noted that less than 1 percent of the 4 to 16 age group with disabilities had access to education. Annor (2002) indicates that access to education for many with disabilities in Ghana is more likely to be an urban phenomenon (although this could also be a result of under-reporting in rural areas). He states access to education for people with disabilities is around 44 percent. It appears more systematic work around levels of access and disability should be carried out. CREATE research in Ghana will be tackling this through household surveys.

Teachers play an important part in influencing disability and access, in particular with relation to retention and meaningful access. However many teachers have little or no training in SEN (Obeng, 2007) and the research below indicates a lack of institutional focus on disability issues in schools. It seems apparent that if teachers have little training in detecting and responding to the needs of children with different forms of disability, they are less likely to be able to work to their special needs. Thurman found that early identification of children with SEN was problematic in her study as about 70 percent of pre-school teachers had had no special training in this area. Obeng (2007) describes how the majority of students with disabilities in study schools (in Accra and some rural areas in Eastern Region) had not had their disabilities detected or identified by professionals. In a survey which involved 66 teachers/head teachers (plus 16 parents), 87 percent of teachers and head teachers were not aware of any existing policy for SEN, and therefore had no arrangements in place for implementation of such policy in their schools (Asamani, 2000). Many (58 percent) indicated a reluctance to have children with SEN in their classes because of large class sizes and as a result an inability to meet the specific needs of these children. This is similar to research by Obeng (2007) which suggests that many teachers were reluctant to have children with disabilities in class (especially those with behaviour problems), because of large class-sizes. Obeng (2007) suggests an important start to improving awareness and recognition of SEN in schooling would be to make Special Education courses a major component in the teacher-training curriculum in Ghana, as well as providing INSET workshops for teachers.

Generally, there seem to be a lack of detailed analytical research into the scale of disability and SEN in Ghanaian schools and its relationships with educational access.

### **5.2.3 HIV/AIDS and educational access**

Bennell, Hyde & Swainson (2002:ix) claim that there has been 'little systematic empirical research' on how HIV/AIDS affects and will affect supply and demand for educational access in Sub-Saharan Africa. This appears to be the case in Ghana. In terms of HIV/AIDS prevalence, Bennell, Hyde & Swainson (2002) put it at 3.6 percent in 1999. This varies according to location. For example, the mean HIV prevalence rate ranges from 3 percent in Northern Ghana to about 5 percent in Southern Ghana (NACP Survey, 2004). According to the Ministry of Health (2001) more than 90 percent of AIDS cases are found among the 15 and 49 age group. HIV/AIDS affects both teachers and students and has indirect and direct influences on educational access. Bennell, Hyde & Swainson (2002:x) call the educational impact of

the epidemic, ‘complex and multi-faceted’ and warn against making broad generalisations about impact across countries.

Children may have been orphaned from AIDS, they may be out-of-school to care for sick household members, there might be cost implications around access where family members are unable to work and some children might be infected with the virus themselves. There is limited research on children, HIV/AIDS and educational access in Ghana. Bennell, Hyde & Swainson (2002) provide some statistical data on AIDS orphans:

**Table 17: Data on AIDS Orphans in Ghana**

	Data year	AIDS orphans % <15 pop	All orphans % <15 pop	Maternal and double % <15 2010 (estimated)	All orphans % <15 2010 (estimated)
Ghana	1991	1	7	2	8

In comparison to some other Sub-Sahara African countries Ghana is not seen as one of the high prevalence countries, where the percentage of orphans (from all causes) is projected to increase very significantly over the next decade. In the coming years the percentage of orphans in Ghana is likely to remain largely unchanged (Bennell, Hyde & Swainson, 2002).

There are a number of potential impacts on educational access if teachers become infected with the HIV/AIDS virus. For example, Tamukong (2004) suggests that infected teachers might experience long and frequent absences from school, low productivity, financial hardships and non-completion of curricula. Tamukong (2004), drawing on Appiah, (2000) claims that prevalence rate for Ghanaian teachers are higher than the national average at around 9.2 percent.

#### **5.2.4 Households influence on access**

Whether a child goes to school can be influenced by a range of household factors and decision making processes. The size of the household, the number of children of school-age, the socio-economic status and the labour demands on the household are all factors which might shape decisions about access to schooling. Other factors such as the gender breakdown of household members (see 5.2.6), whether there are non-family members (or distant family members) in the household and the educational background of household members might also influence access. In this section literature around households and educational access in Ghana is explored.

Hashim (2004, cited in Hashim, 2005:17) carried out research on migration and education, focusing on a village in Northern Ghana. She describes how the likelihood of children’s enrolment was based around a complex mix of factors which included the education levels of parents, particularly mothers, the ability to pay the indirect/direct costs of schooling and the types of livelihoods the households were pursuing. In this respect, she states that the likelihood of a child’s enrolment, ‘was an outcome of the different ways in which households were organised, the manner in which household members’ time was occupied and the types of assets they invested in, including human capital’. Tansel (1997:826) found whilst exploring the

relationships between schooling attainment, parental education in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire that 'households are credit constrained in their schooling investments decisions'. Further studies in Ghana link into the benefits of parental education to schooling access for children (Mensah, 1992, Lloyd and Blanc, 1996 cited in CARE International, 2003; Johnson and Kyle, 2001; Montgomery, Kouamé, Oliver, 1995). Overall, these studies suggest that parental education, particularly the mother's education has a big influence on children's schooling (i.e. attendance and achievement).

Other research looks at educational decision-making based around family size. Montgomery, Kouamé and Oliver (1995) looked at data from the Ghana Living Standards Measurement Surveys. From that they detected a trade-off between fertility and schooling in both rural and urban areas. For them the most striking findings were the large impact of mother's schooling in lowering fertility and raising child schooling, and the large predicted impact of mother's secondary schooling, particularly in rural areas (Montgomery, Kouamé and Oliver, 1995). Hashim (2005:17) describes how households make decisions with often 'those who are most willing, able and determined' going to school, 'while other children were kept at home to ensure the availability of the necessary labour to secure livelihoods and assets'. She goes on:

'Parents frequently aspired to educate their children. However, education was seen as one among a range of means of securing their children's long-term welfare. Consequently, the ability and desire to educate all their children was tempered by a child's perceived interest and scholastic ability, by parents' assessment of education as a viable livelihood strategy, and by the need to secure and protect the household's immediate well-being, which might require a reduction in expenditure, such as those associated with educating a child, or a need for labour to ensure subsistence' (Hashim, 2005:17).

A study by Pilon (2003) looked at foster-care in West Africa and access to schooling. According to 1998 figures (EDS cited in Pilon, 2003), about 16 percent of children under the age of 15 were not living with their biological parents (16.1 percent in rural and 14.9 percent in urban households), and one child in four between the ages of 10 and 14 lives with neither parent. Fostering occurs for a range of reasons including family bereavement, child labour and access to education. In terms of education, 'the relationship between foster care and schooling is fundamentally ambivalent' (Pilon, 2003). Some children go into foster care in order to attend school, whilst others are fostered after dropping out of school, often to supply forms of child labour (e.g. domestic support, agricultural labour, working in fishing communities). There seem to be rural/urban divisions in fostering and educational access. Pilon (2003) suggests that in rural communities where schools are a distance away, children might be fostered into another community where there is a school. In rural areas the enrolment rate for children residing without their parents was higher than that of the household heads' own children (which suggests children are fostered in order to attend school). Conversely, in urban areas, children living without their parents seem to have lower enrolment rates than the household heads' own offspring. With under-enrolment affecting girls more than boys suggesting that girls are fostered in urban areas to provide domestic support to households, rather than to access education.

Case, Paxson and Ableidinger (2004) explored similar issues around orphan-hood, poverty and access to schooling in ten sub-Saharan African countries. In findings different to Pilon's (2003) claims about rural access above, they found that orphans were less likely to be enrolled than are non-orphans with whom they live. The theory (Hamilton's rule) being that the closeness of biological ties governs altruistic behaviour, and that whether orphans have access to school to some extent depends on their relatedness to their household heads. Thus, the lower enrolment of orphans is largely a result of the greater tendency for them to live with distant relatives or unrelated caregivers. Looking at fostered children in general (and not just orphans) they suggest that 'the probability of school enrolment is inversely proportional to the degree of relatedness of the child to the household head - whether the child is an orphan or not' (Case, Paxson and Ableidinger, 2004:505). Therefore fostered children living with grandparents are at the smallest disadvantage, whilst those living with 'other relatives' are less likely to be enrolled at school, and those living with non-relatives least likely to attend school. In terms of Ghana specifically, in comparison to other sub-Saharan African countries, the fraction of orphans tends to be lower. Also Case et al., (2004) state that in Ghana orphans in non-blended households (i.e. those containing no non-orphans) are significantly less likely to be in school than are orphans in blended households (i.e. those containing orphans and non-orphans). Moreover, girl-orphans are often at a greater risk of not being enrolled in school in Ghana, than boys (which they found to be different to other sub-Saharan countries).

Pilon (2003:23-24) discuss 'vulnerability' of children in foster care having access to schooling and referred to work done in Cotonou in the early 1990s which showed that the children most vulnerable to non-enrolment were foster children, especially girls (Charmes, 1993 cited in Pilon, 2003). Hashim (2005:22) describes how migrant children's access to education is vulnerable if the house to which they move becomes unable to maintain their costs. In terms of improving educational access for orphans, Case, Paxson and Ableidinger (2004) suggest policies that are directed toward orphans, including policies that are aimed at keeping orphans with close family members.

### **5.2.5 Migration and educational access**

Migration is linked to issues of fostering and orphan-hood (see 5.2.4), but also includes the movement of household units. In Ghana the latter might include pastoralist, nomadic and fishing communities. Available studies on migration and educational access in Ghana will be explored.

Hashim (2005) looks at the independent migration of children from farming households in rural Northern Ghana to urban households in central and Southern Ghana, and relationships with educational access. In the northern village (Tempene Natinga) where the northern study originated, she describes how in 2001, 77 out of 447 children (c.17 percent) of children had independently migrated out of the village (48 children were also within the village, but not living with immediate family). She carried out interviews with parents of the migrated children and child migrants from the Kusasi ethnic group (the numerically dominant ethnic group of the sending area) who were living in Kumasi, and a 100 mile radius around. Thirty-nine of the children she spoke to migrated for employment; 20 for education; and 19 to help a relative (although education could be a secondary consideration with movement). Hashim



(2005:13) describes how in villages specialising in out-migration, children frequently drop out of school before the completion of compulsory education to migrate to cities, although the earnings of these migrants might be used to pay for the education of a sibling. She also spoke of how increasing demand for educational access in the south might lead to domestic labour requirements being filled by child migrants from the north. She goes on, 'my field diaries and interview notes are full of references to young people travelling south because they had dropped out of school as they had failed an exam or been unable to acquire the funds to continue schooling. However, my field diaries and interview notes were also littered with examples of young people who, rather than dropping out, had migrated to acquire the funds to re-sit exams or further their education' (Hashim, 2005:29).

Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy (1999:334) allude to the gendered aspects of child migration and the sense that girls seemed to be migrating more than boys. In the districts in which their study was based, the differences in sex ratios indicated that more girls were leaving communities than boys, and this was especially the case for older age children (aged 13 years and above). Focus group discussions indicated that children often left to help a family member. In the two southern districts of the study (Ziope and Amankwa) many girls migrated to become housemaids to family members in urban areas, while others continued schooling outside the district. A CARE International (2003) study describes how a significant proportion of girls between the ages of 12-18 migrated from districts in the north to urban areas to find employment and earn money for the dowry (e.g. provision of cloths, pots, etc.) in order to prepare for marriage.

### **5.2.6 Gender and educational access**

This analytic review has previously provided statistical data around gender and access to education. The main findings were that while there was more or less gender parity in terms of initial access to primary education, boys were more likely to stay longer at school, with girls dropping out in substantial numbers from the age of thirteen (see Section 4).

Gendered schooling patterns are context-specific, with research indicating differentiations across Ghana. For example, Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang (2004) state that girls are generally disadvantaged compared to boys in terms of educational access, but the probability of attending school is further worsened for those girls living in rural areas and peripheral regions. Yet in research by Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001) there were more girls enrolled in schools in Fumbisi than boys (46 percent girls; 30 percent boys), which appears to be against the norm for the Upper East Region. Similarly, Johnson and Kyle (2001) speak of higher drop out rates for girls, whereas Avotri (2000) suggests boys tend to drop out more than girls (to work, this may also be a result of initial low enrolment rates of girls). The point raised is though, that while some general patterns might be found around gendered access, these might not be applicable across board and need also to be viewed in location-specific contexts.

Studies indicate a number of reasons why girls tend to have lower enrolment rates than boys, higher drop out and less transition to secondary. The Academy for Educational Development (2002) calls barriers to education for girls, 'multifaceted

and interrelated' but notes a common denominator to be poverty. Other factors in influencing female enrolments have been identified as: beliefs and practices and the perception of the role of girls by families and communities (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004); costs (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Avotri, 2000); the opportunity cost of sending girls to school (Academy for Educational Development, 2002) and girls having to travel long distances to go to school (Academy for Educational Development, 2002). Avotri (2000) states that faced with affordability constraints, parents tend to send boys to school over girls.

Yidana (2000) studied the main factors accounting for the disparities in male and female enrolment ratios and low retention of female students in the Mamprusi District of Northern Ghana. He found that poverty, unemployment and lack of a regular source of income were often cited by parents' as the main reasons for their inability to support the education of their girl child. This also seems to indicate socio-cultural factors which privilege boys' education over girls' education. Several studies suggest that traditional societies' preference for boys' education restricts girls' access to education. There are also many religious and cultural practices in some communities that discriminate against the education of girls (see Sutherland-Addy, 2002; Chao and Alper, 1998; Stephens, 1998). These, studies, though limited in scope do suggest that household conditions and welfare affect access and school attendance, and in some contexts girls are more likely to miss out on schooling. In coastal areas of Ghana, many parents are seasonal migrants who leave their children in the care of grandparents who are unable to undertake the financial support for the children's schooling. Casely-Hayford (2002) found that some of these children work after hours after school as weavers, in fishing and trading (i.e. selling food items).

Boateng (2005), investigated the causes of girls dropping out of schools in 9 public schools in one district (the Awutu Senya District) and found that about one half (48 percent) of those who dropped out cited lack of financial support as a major reason. In the same study, child labour accounted for a fifth of all drop outs and about a tenth (12 percent) was due to family break-up. Boakye et al., (1997), conducted a national study into factors affecting girls' education. Their study revealed that poverty, costs, pregnancy, early marriage and betrothal were critical factors influencing participation and retention in schooling. Other significant factors included sexual harassment, household chores, emotional instability, and parents' inability to provide for school needs. Other studies confirm these claims around girls dropping out (see Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Obeng, 2006; Fentiman, Hall & Bundy, 1999). The Academy for Educational Development (2002) emphasises some supply side factors e.g. an inadequate number of female teachers and role models; rigid adherence to school times and calendars; inadequate sanitary conditions in schools, which frequently influence the drop out and retention practices of girls. Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (1999) emphasise the gendered nature of migration, which in particular affects girls over the age of 13 years, who leave communities (and frequently schooling) often in order to undertake domestic work elsewhere (see 5.2.5). Yeboah (1997) claims that the quality of school and performance were reasons parents found for withdrawing girls from school in Accra and Koforidua.

Yeboah (1997) provides an interesting study on how households made decisions about girls' primary schooling in Ghana. She carried out qualitative interviews with fifteen

families in Accra and Koforidua (as well as observations) in 1995. She found that there was some favouring of boys over girls, but also that gender only became an issue to families when they were obligated to make a decision about either a daughter's or a son's access to school. She notes that culture, quality of school, performance of a child, gender, sex role stereotyping, and perceptions of which child will most likely look after a parent were critical variables in family decision-making around girls' education.

Experiences and practices of schooling are also often gendered, Dunne, Leach et al (2005) discuss this more. Studies on the access and retention of girls also allude to the important role having female teachers and role models, plays (Fentiman, Hall & Bundy, 1999). Yet Casely-Hayford and Wilson (2001) describe the difficulties in getting female teachers into remote rural areas of Ghana and the poor supply of females in these areas. They highlight the need to design strategies to attract and retain more female teachers in deprived rural areas of the country.

Studies are required to look at some of these issues further to ascertain how gender interacts with access, and informs approaches to attendance and drop out.

### 5.2.7 Geographic differences: educational access in the north of Ghana

Educational access varies considerably throughout Ghana. On the whole educational access in the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana is substantially lower than more southerly areas. According to the Ghana EMIS (Ministry of Education, n.d) survey analysis there were about 23 districts with 60-70 percent of primary-age children out of school (see Table 18). Most of those districts are in Northern Ghana, but there are some in the South. An Action Aid Ghana (1994) study in the North, found that only a third of a population of nearly 14,000 school age children were in school. This statistics suggest that national aggregated data on out of school children (see Section 3) hides wide disparities.

**Table 18: Children out of school (6-11 years)**

	Upper West Region	Upper East Region	Northern Region	Total in Ghana
% boys out of school	40.0%	35.1%	32.8%	15.6%
% girls out of school	26.8%	45.4%	42.7%	18.4%

(Source: GSS, 2000)

In a comparative study of three districts between 1994-6 in Ghana, research by Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, (1999) explored the comparisons in educational access according to location. Constantly access in the Fumbisi circuit, Upper East region, was lower than that of Ziope circuit, Volta region and Amankwa circuit, Eastern region. In Fumbisi, the majority of children aged 6-11 years were not in school, and enrolment rates were lower than the other two districts. Indeed, in Fumbisi 62 percent of boys and 44 percent of girls (aged 6-18 years) had never enrolled in school, this compared to a combined average of 20 percent in Ziope and 23 percent in Amankwa. Net enrolment rates at primary school were around one third of children in Fumbisi, but around two thirds of children in the other two districts. High drop out rates from initial grades takes place in all districts, but more children in Ziope and Amankwa were completing primary and junior secondary school than children in Fumbisi. In

Fumbisi, 10 percent of boys and 19 percent of girls make it to junior secondary. Fentiman suggests that while there are similarities in enrolment patterns in the three districts (e.g. in terms of early enrolment for girls; overall late enrolment in class one; wide age span of children in primary school, and the failure to complete a basic education), the differences in educational access, 'are more extreme'.

Studies in Ghana have shown that access issues tend to be more pronounced in areas that are prone to a range of interlocking socio-economic factors. For example, high levels of illiteracy, low levels of human resource development, low levels of economic development, low levels of democratic participation, high levels of infant and child mortality and morbidity, and low levels of general family health, among others (see Ministry of Education, 2002a). In Ghana these areas are more likely to be found in the north of the country. Their interaction with educational access in the context of northern communities will be explored in more detail.

Research indicates a range of interconnected factors influencing the lower levels of access in northern Ghana. These include: the socio-economic status of households (Action Aid Ghana, 1994) a lack of teachers in rural areas (Action Aid REV program survey report, 2000); the nature of community settlements (i.e. small, sparsely populated and widely scattered) (CARE International, 2003); low community perceptions and demands for education (Hashim, 2005); limited community-school relationships (Dunne, Leach et al, 2005); a rigid schooling system, which doesn't cater for the particular needs of local rural communities; high teacher absenteeism; migration out of communities, particularly of girls (CARE International, 2003). Interestingly Hashim (2005) provides one take on education access in the north. She paints a picture of access which is evolving, not static; where perceptions and expectations of childhood play a role in how the demand for education is constructed. She states:

'The majority of the population in Tempane Natinga were not yet certain of the value of education. Consequently, in contrast to the 'modern' conceptualisation of childhood, discussed earlier, education was not implicated in 'normal' childhood in the same way, and the inability to attend school was not perceived as an opportunity denied. Transformations were occurring in the meaning of education as a result of the changes in the lived experiences of individuals in Tempane Natinga, in particular due to the manner in which the labour market has changed and the increasing importance of the 'modern' sector economy. However, education was not fully implicated in the construction of childhood but rather viewed as a new form of recruitment to work, representing the possibility of alternative livelihoods' (Hashim, 2005:18).

It is perhaps within attitudes to education that demand for schooling can be shaped. Various studies suggest a different approach to schooling in the north; these are described in more detail in 5.2.15.

### **5.2.8 Schooling access in rural and urban areas**

Research suggests there are large differences in schooling access in rural and urban areas of Ghana with rural areas on the whole having significantly lower levels of

educational access. Demand and supply-side factors interact to produce these differentials.

Kraft et al., (1995) described the inequities in the quality of educational provision between urban and rural schools in Ghana. They recorded the ‘dramatic difference’ between the opportunities of the children in rural settings compared to those in urban and peri-urban settings. These differences could be found in most aspects of schools including buildings, curriculum, furniture, toilets, textbooks, management, quality and motivation of teachers, parental wealth and education. There was significant emphasis on the need for teacher support and supervision in rural areas. Many of these differences appear to perpetuate today. The 2004 EMIS report shows that rural schools have weak indicators of quality, for example, the least number of qualified teachers, the highest pupil-teacher-ratios and the lowest gender parity rates.

### **5.2.9 Schooling costs and access**

Public basic education in Ghana is tuition free. However, a high non-tuition cost of schooling has been known to discourage some poor households from sending their children to school. Several studies have shown that the indirect and direct costs of schooling (including school levies, fees are one of the major causes of non-attendance to school (MOYS/UNICEF, 1992/93; Oduro 2000). According to Oduro (2000), the high cost of schooling is often the most frequent reason cited for non-attendance. The three largest expenditure items facing households are the cost of providing food and clothing, school levies and registration costs (Oduro, 2000).

When asked why their children were not in school, parents and guardians often indicated that one of the major obstacles was economic (Fentiman et al., 1999). This was in terms of school fees, indirect costs (such as uniform and transport) and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Similarly, Canagarajah and Coulombe (1997:27) point out that, ‘the high cost of schooling pushes children into the labour market to enable them to afford school or pull them away from school as they can not afford it. Hence, the official and unofficial fee charged for schooling is negatively correlated with school participation’. Avotri (2000) noted that direct and indirect costs are the main factors affecting access to schooling (especially in rural areas and for girls who are required to do more household chores). Although officially there may be no fees for entrance of textbooks, costs are required for uniforms, exercise books, stationery, furniture, transport etc. According to Avotri (2000), faced with affordability constraints, parents tend to send boys to school over girls.

If poor families are sending children to school, their education is a significant part of household expenditure. The Ghana National Education Coalition Campaign GNECC) carried out a case study of basic education costs to households in the Ga West District of Accra (see Table 19).

What Table 19 shows is that, the introduction of capitation grant may not be sufficient as a remover of the barrier to access. Even without the element of cost due to food, the lowest amount for a household is more than twice the capitation fee. It would appear that the capitation is not sufficient in absorbing the costs to households in enrolling their children in public schools. What might be useful is a study of parents’ perceptions of the value of capitation and what schools are able to achieve with this

amount, in terms of making schools productive centres of learning. This will be explored as one of the CREATE thematic studies in Ghana.

**Table 19: Category and Range of levies Parents pay for Basic Education: Ga West District**

Category of Fees	Median in Cedis	Range in Cedis
Annual levy	29,000.00	13,000 to 96,000
Annual PTA	5,000.00	2,000 to 15,000
Term Exam Fee	10,000.00	2,000 to 45,000
Term stationery levy	80,000.00	10,000 to 150,000
Rulers and Math sets	9,000.00	5,000 to 260,000
Uniform + shoes, belt, socks	100,000.00	30,000 to 45,000
School bag	45,000.00	10,000 to 60,000
Daily food bought at school	880,000.00	
<b>Total (without food)</b>	281,000.00	75,000 to 665,000
<b>Total (with food)</b>	1,161,500.00	519,000 to 6,165,000

(Source: GNECC, 2005)

In a study of household decision-making around schooling in rural Ghana based on data drawn from a survey of 1,902 primary school age children, Lavy (1992) concludes that the cost of advanced levels of education influence primary schooling decisions, meaning that if the direct cost of enrollment in middle or secondary schools is much higher than for primary schools, households reduce investment in primary education. Households weigh the value of primary education in terms of the likelihood of continuing beyond it, especially to secondary education level which has a higher rate of return (Glewwe 1991). Based on rural households survey data from the 1987-1988 living standards survey data Lavy (1992) finds that costs associated with distance to secondary schools is a significant determinant of enrollments at the primary level. Bearing this in mind, costs of junior and senior secondary education in Ghana influence enrolment and drop out rates in primary, and need to be taken into account when exploring opportunities to improve access and attendance at primary school level.

### 5.2.10 Child labour and access

The relationship between child labour and educational access has been touched on already in previous sections on migration and households. Depending on the nature of the work (and the type of educational opportunities available), child labour can: increase pressure to or cause drop outs from schooling; or provide financial support for the child's schooling and/or that of siblings, many children both work and attend school.

In terms of age as a child grows older, the opportunity cost of their time often increases (Glewwe & Jacoby, 1995 in Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999:340; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; Blunch & Verner, 2000). This can be seen for example in the migration habits of children, often from economically poorer communities for employment and domestic support, which increases after the ages of 13 (see: 5.2.5).

Pressures on children to work might be seasonal in some contexts, which often have implications for attendance at school. For example, Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy (1999:345) describe how children in their focus communities were often absent during the planting and harvesting seasons. While this is often a temporary withdrawal from schooling, research on drop outs suggests that temporary withdrawals of this nature are often precursors to more permanent withdrawals.

Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997) analysed linkages between child labour and decision-making around schooling, using national household surveys conducted from 1987 to 1992. Based on children aged 7-14 years, the following observations were made:

- 28 percent of children were involved in child labour in Ghana
- In 1992 two-thirds of the children in child labour were simultaneously schooling.
- Around 90 percent of children were involved in household chores.
- There were some clear gender based distinctions in the type of tasks performed by girl and boy workers: girls do more household chores, whilst boys are more likely to be in the labour force. Girls tend to work more hours than boys, especially if household chores are taken into consideration.
- More than 90 percent of child labour is in rural areas.
- Children of private informal sector wage earners and food crop producing farmers had the highest incidence of child labour. The majority of children were unpaid family workers, involved in family farm and enterprises.

Overall, there was a significant negative relationship between going to school and working. Also the presence of children less than 6 years old tends to increase the probability of girls working and not schooling, and the presence of female adults increased the probability of girls schooling and not working.

Another study by Blunch & Verner (2000) examined the relationships between child labour, access to education and poverty in Ghana. Data was taken from a 1997 household survey of Ghana, covering 14,514 households and analysis focused on children aged 9-14. The study found, for example, that incidences of child labour which conflicted with access to schooling increased as the child grew older. Rural children were over twice as likely to engage in child labor that was in conflict with school access, than were urban children. Girls were more likely than boys to be involved in child labour which was in conflict with school access, as were poor children. Finally involvement in child labour (which interferes with schooling access) was related to having parents being self-employed, family ownership of land and livestock, and the distances to the nearest primary school and the nearest secondary school.

Thus the indications are that child labour can influence access to schooling. If you are rural, poor, a girl and over the age of 13, the likelihood of this work negatively affecting access to school is greatly increased.

### 5.2.11 Teachers: supply, qualifications and attendance

The President's Committee on the Review of the Education Reforms (GOG, 2002) reported that about 5 percent of primary schools in Ghana had only one or no teacher at all. Other research studies have noted acute teacher shortages and poor teacher attendance as endemic in the Ghanaian basic education system (see Bennell & Akyeampong 2006; World Bank, 2004; Akyeampong 2003; Hedges 2002). These studies also show that many trained teachers are unwilling to accept postings to deprived communities, and those who do, stay for a short period before seeking transfers (Akyeampong & Asante, 2006; Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001 in CARE International, 2003; MOESS, 2005a:53). As a result there is a tendency for less-qualified teachers to be employed in these communities (Hedges, 2002) and certain rural areas (e.g. the northern regions), 'suffer from an acute shortage of teachers' (CARE International, 2003:iii). One study suggests factors influencing teachers' desire not to work in these communities include: a lack of adequate accommodation, unsafe drinking water, and lack of electricity, poor health conditions, limited transport, and a lack of personal development opportunities (Action Aid REV Programme Survey Report, 2000). Overall teaching continues to be a male dominated profession in Ghana (Dunne, Leach et al, 2005).

There is a large discrepancy between the percentages of trained teachers in deprived districts as against non-deprived districts. Despite an annual output of almost 8,000 qualified teachers from the teacher training colleges, there still seems to be high incidence of teacher attrition (MOESS, 2005a:53).

**Table 20: Primary qualified teachers as percentage of the teaching force**

Teacher Deployment	2002-2003 Actual %	2003-2004 Actual %	2004-2005 Actual %
% of qualified teachers: National	73.6	73.9	72.4
% of qualified teachers: Northern	58.5	52.2	51.6
% of qualified teachers: U East	67.1	74.8	70.3
% of qualified teachers: U West	75.6	77.1	78.5
% of qualified teachers: 40 deprived	56.0	55.3	53.2
% of qualified teachers: in other districts	80.5	81.0	79.8

(Source: MOESS, 2005a:42)

As shown in Table 20, for three consecutive years of 2002-03, through to 2004-05 about 26 percent of primary school teachers at the national level were unqualified. In 2003-04, 26 percent of primary school teachers were unqualified and 16 percent for the JSS. These percentages increase up to 45 percent (primary) and 24 percent (JSS) for the 40 deprived districts. The figures for 2003-04 represent a negative trend on that of the previous year. The Northern Region, for example, had 59 percent of its teachers trained implying 41 percent untrained while the deprived districts had 44 percent untrained teachers. The rest of the information can be interpreted in the same way from Table 21. The overall trend shows a declining pattern for the Northern Region and the 40 deprived districts in the percentage of their trained teachers at the primary level.



**Table 21: JSS qualified teachers as percentage of the teaching force**

Teacher Deployment	2002-2003 Actual	2003-2004 Actual	2004-2005 Actual
% of qualified teachers: National	85.3%	84.2%	83.5%
% of qualified teachers: Northern	86.3%	80.8%	79.7%
% of qualified teachers: U East	74.2%	75.6%	77.5%
% of qualified teachers: U West	75.6%	81.1%	82.0%
% of qualified teachers: 40 deprived	76.5%	75.9%	73.9%
% of qualified teachers: in other districts	85.4%	86.3%	86.1%

(Source: MOESS, 2006)

In spite of the inflow of nearly 8,000 newly qualified teachers per annum the national percentage of qualified teachers fell. This suggests a high rate of teacher attrition. Only the Upper East and Upper West regions show a continuous increase in the percentage of qualified teachers since 2002-03. All other regions have suffered a more or less severe fall in the percentage of trained teachers at the JSS level (see Table 21).

Teacher absenteeism is important in terms of both children's access to education and the nature of that access. The widespread problem of teacher absenteeism is likely to contribute to poor pupil attendance. The prevailing evidence is that teacher absenteeism at primary school level in Ghana appears to have worsened in the last fifteen years (World Bank, 2004). The World Bank impact evaluation of basic education in Ghana found that, "in 2003, nearly 13 percent of teachers had been absent in the past month, compared to just over 4 percent in 1988" (World Bank, 2004:101). It also observed that "in 1988, 85 percent of schools did not suffer at all; whereas this figure has now fallen to 61 percent, with 13 percent of schools with over one-third of the teachers being absent for reasons other than sickness in the past month" (World Bank, 2004:103). The study also found absenteeism to be significantly worse in rural schools than in urban schools, and worse in public schools compared to private schools (see Table 22). Similarly the CARE International (2003:18) report which looks at deprived rural areas in northern Ghana talks of 'chronic teacher absenteeism' which 'adversely affects the learning environment' and Dunne, Leach et al. (2005) talk about the low levels of professionalism in schools (especially low performing ones), with teachers having high rates of lateness, absenteeism and sometimes refusing to teach classes. Table 22 reports bivariate analysis of school level absenteeism rates using 2003 data (World Bank, 2004).

**Table 22: Teacher absenteeism Rates, 2003**

Frequency	Urban	Rural	Public	Private
None	61	61	56	80
Up to a third schools	27	23	29	14
Between one to two thirds schools	9	10	11	4
More than two thirds of schools	2	7	5	1
Number of observations	451	255	568	138

(Source: World Bank, 2004)

The World Bank (2004) report put forward a number of reasons for the increasing teacher absenteeism. These included: teachers living long distances from schools and experiencing transportation difficulties; teachers having to travel to town once a month to collect their pay, which may or may not have arrived; and, rural teachers engaging in farming activities. Although factors will be context-specific, multivariate

analysis on teacher survey data also showed that teacher absenteeism was more likely to occur if the following factors were prevalent: poor working conditions, low morale, and high pupil-teacher ratio, living with spouse, being in their home district, and having good social relations (World Bank, 2004:105). These last three factors were explained as possible causes of distraction from work. Barnes (2003) describes how many teachers are being encouraged in Ghana to facilitate local level development, which although it can have positive impacts on schooling, can also lead to teacher absenteeism and lateness.

In another national survey study, Fobih, Akyeampong and Koomson (1999) arrived unannounced in some 60 schools and found that about 85 percent of teachers arrived late. Lateness ranged from five minutes up to one and a half hours. This meant teaching time was lost, teachers taught fewer school subjects (i.e. taught mainly English and Mathematics out of 10 subjects), and the shortening of the school day for students (Fobih, Akyeampong & Koomson, 1999). Although absenteeism and lateness is widespread, it appears that serious instances are more likely to occur in rural schools than in urban schools. Both absenteeism and lateness Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) point out are symptomatic of education systems that are unable to manage teachers effectively, have weak teacher management structures, and are unable to provide incentives to motivate teachers to improve their attitudes to work. Although penalties and sanctions for lateness and absenteeism have been prescribed by the GES, head teachers seem unable to enforce them because the professional culture does not promote the necessary authority for enforcement (Akyeampong & Asante, 2006). Similarly, a study by CARE International (2003:20) identified that poor communities felt unable to hold teachers to account for their poor attendance. The report claims that, 'communities were reticent in exposing high level of absenteeism and viewed the teachers as 'untouchable'. Communities felt they should not rock the boat by making complaints or reporting teachers who are not in the classroom for a significant amount of time'. It suggests that most communities were hesitant to report these teachers for fear that the GES would not post additional teachers to their communities, thus forcing the school to be closed. It seems there were both systemic and relational factors which inhibited both top-down and bottom-up pressure on teachers to improve attendance rates.

#### **5.2.12 Schools: supply and facilities**

Supply of schools in some districts and for some communities in Ghana is problematic. This is especially the case for post-primary education and communities living in poor, rural areas. A study by CARE International (2003) describes distance to school and supply of schools for small settlements as key challenges facing educational access in deprived rural areas in northern Ghana. Access to schooling can also be problematic for fishing communities, with some schools 'inaccessible' and some only reached by canoe (Fentiman, Hall and Bundy, 2001). In northern Ghana, sparsely populated communities, 'scattered across the regions' makes school supply problematic. The Core Welfare indicators report (1998 in CARE International, 2003) states that the Upper West and Upper East Regions have the highest percentage of children walking over 30 minutes to school each day (34.9% children in the Upper West) and (32.6% in the Upper East). Often distance to school was cited by these communities as one of the main reasons for non-attendance (CARE International, 2003). Distance to school was also cited in other research reports in Ghana as a factor

in non-enrolment (Avotri, 2000); late-enrolment (Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999); absenteeism; drop out and a failure to move from primary to secondary (Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999).

There is also the question of what children have access to. The answer to this question differs throughout the country. Research indicates rural schools are more generally deprived than urban and peri-urban schools. Rural schools have the least number of qualified teachers, the highest pupil teacher ratios and the lowest gender parity. Additionally many rural schools have an inadequate supply of teaching resources and basic facilities. In communities where children are required to provide support within households at particular times, the formal schooling system which is based around rigid and set times might not always be appropriate (Avotri, 2000). This might particularly be the case for girl students (FAWE, 2001 in Academy for Educational Development, 2002). The CARE International (2003) study describes how the school calendar and schooling hours may be incompatible with daily realities of life in rural areas, as schooling times are often incompatible with time needed for household chores and farming duties.

### **5.2.13 School practices and gendered school experiences**

There has been some (limited) research on the practices and processes of schooling and their affects on educational access in Ghana. But more work is needed to provide greater understandings of the push outs and pull-ins generated through schooling. The major work of this kind is on gendered school experiences (Dunne and Leach, et al, 2005) and this study will provide the basis for this section. Dunne, Leach et al (2005) explore the formal and informal schooling environment in six junior secondary<sup>20</sup> schools in Ghana (and six in Botswana also) to identify schooling practices which promoted gendered schooling experiences. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, they look at these gendered experiences in the context of retention (and achievement) of girls and boys at the junior secondary level; they raise issues around causality and the interlocking factors contributing to retention and achievement, but indicate, ‘the case studies provide a wealth of evidence to show how the gendered experiences of both students and teachers contribute to ... national data’ (Dunne, Leach et al., 2005: vii).

The study (Dunne, Leach et al., 2005) makes the following claims around gender access, gendered experiences and retention.

- Similar gendered experiences were recounted in all schools for students and teachers.
- General drop-out rates were much higher in Ghana (than Botswana); girls dropped out more than boys often for reasons linked to early marriage and pregnancy. However, in low performing schools in Ghana boys dropped out more than girls – reasons for this are suggested are poor quality schooling and local opportunities for boys' income generation.
- Truancy and poor punctuality were higher amongst boys, particularly in low performing schools in urban areas where there was more income generating

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<sup>20</sup> There were three high achieving and three low achieving schools, two in urban areas, two in peri-urban areas and two in rural areas.

possibility.

- Absence and lateness for girls was excused more easily as sickness or domestic emergency, whereas boys' was attributed to casual income generation, seasonal labour, and corporal punishment.
- In the schools teachers were teaching conventional 'male' and 'female' subjects. In Ghana, the female teachers were predominantly in the languages and HE with a few teaching agriculture.
- Female teachers tended to stay longer in teaching and be concentrated in urban schools.
- Institutional practices maintained and perpetuated the gendered nature of schooling, with gendered hierarchies firmly established in classroom duties and activities, as well as outside the classroom (as in assembly queues).
- 'In the classrooms boys almost always sat at the back and round the sides and girls at the front and in the middle. Boys thus dominated the physical and verbal classroom space, which discouraged the girls. As they worked around the boundaries imposed, the girls' opportunities to excel in the public arena and in the presence of the teacher were limited and they demonstrated low levels of classroom participation'
- Teacher and student relations tended to be authoritarian, with some reports by boys of sexual relations between male teachers and female students, and open questioning by boys of female teachers' authority.
- Corporal punishment was still used (despite national legislation) in both countries, and tends to be worse against boys. Female teachers tended to use verbal abuse against students (especially boys) more, which students reported as being worse than physical abuse. There were high levels of bullying, aggressive behaviour and sexual harassment among students (especially boys towards girls).

#### **5.2.14 Community links to school**

There is some evidence that strong community-school linkages have impact on educational access. There has been some research on this in the context of Ghana.

A literature review by Academy for Educational Development-ERNWACA (2002) on issues of access, quality and community participation in education in Western Africa, identified four main modes of participation: participation in decision-making process, through School Management Committees and PTAs; participation in the school through material, financial help and community labour often around the development of school buildings and facilities; participation in teaching and learning processes; participation focused on access to education where community members promote access e.g. through registration of births, moral persuasion, imposing fines on defaulters. The Academy for Educational Development-ERNWACA (2002) research generally talks about the benefits and positive aspects of community participation, although they acknowledge community involvement is not always as commonplace<sup>21</sup> or effective as it could be. There was some discussion around community participation and access. Teachers, who indicated that community participation has

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<sup>21</sup> Dunne, Leach et al. (2005) looking urban, peri-urban and rural schools in Ghana also described how there was little evidence of community involvement in schools, especially in rural areas and/or in low performing schools.

increased access, stated for example that: the involvement of the chief, elders and parents with children in school in enrolment drives had at times compelled other parents to send their children to school; the provision of basic needs such as furniture had made the school attractive to pupils and helped in retention. Thus community involvement in enrolment drives had increased enrolments in education (Academy for Educational Development-ERNWACA, 2002)

In a study by CARE International (2003) a lack of capacity of community members to affect change was noted. The report describes how community members were unable to hold teachers to account for their poor attendance. It states, 'poor communities felt disempowered and helpless'. They were reticent about raising issues because of the implications that it may have on future teacher supply. It seems the mechanisms for empowered participation were not available in this context.

### 5.2.15 Non state provision of basic education

In 2004-2005 private schooling made up about 21 percent of primary enrolment and 19 percent of junior secondary enrolments (see Table 23). The period from 2003-2004 to 2004-5, saw primary enrolments in the private sector increase by about 23 percent, and junior secondary enrolments by 30 percent (see Table 24). Thus private provision is an expanding form of educational access in Ghana.

Private schooling in Ghana is mainly an urban phenomenon and run mainly on for profit basis. Tooley's (2005) study of private schools in Ghana suggested there were many 'unrecognized' private schools and schools managed by charitable organizations, operating in low income urban periphery areas. According to Tooley (2005), these schools were perceived to be providing better quality primary education (largely to poor households), than state providers. LaRocque (2001) suggests their popularity could be attributed to the perception that they provide the mechanism for social mobility, and partly because of falling quality in public school education. Private schooling might also be plugging gaps in supply, with poor quality private and religious schools growing in number to accommodate students who cannot find access to government schooling. These claims require further exploration, and the scale of such provision needs to be looked at.

**Table 23: Number of Basic Schools by Type of Education (2004)**

Type of Education	No. schools 1998/99	No. schools 1999/2000	% growth	No. schools 2003/2004	No. schools 2004/2005	% growth
<b>Primary</b>						
Public	11581	11,916	2.9	11,895	12,406	4.3
Private	1,546	2,163	39.9	2,724	3,622	33.0
<b>Junior Secondary</b>						
Public	5,896	6,054	2.7	6,304	6,637	5.3
Private	504	775	53.8	1,322	1,786	35.1

(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

On the whole, private schools in Ghana are concentrated in high population density areas and draw their clientele from high to middle level income groups. A USAID sponsored survey of public/private schools in 2001 found that most parents of pupils attending private schools were traders (34 percent), farmers (30 percent) or had jobs

in the public sector (about 15 percent). This compares to public schools in their study where parents of about 54 percent were farmers and 22 percent traders. These figures suggest that either private schools are slightly less accessible for people in rural areas and/or children from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to access private schooling more. Indeed, private schools in this survey were mostly in peri-urban areas, and were accessed by households that could afford to pay.

**Table 24: Basic school enrolment by of education (2004)**

	<b>Enrolment</b>		% change
	2003/2004	2004/2005	
<b>Primary</b>			
Public	2,196,774	2,332,767	6.2
Private	489,359	602,844	23.2
<b>Junior secondary</b>			
Primary	773,982	823,743	6.4
Public	145,352	188,516	29.7

(Source: Ministry of Education EMIS data)

From an equity perspective, the increased institutional choice private schooling brings is only meaningful for those who can afford it. High and middle-income families send their children to good private primary schools, thus ensuring them a place in the best public secondary schools and thereafter entrance to top public universities (Addae-Mensah, 2000). Private senior secondary schools are few and often serve a small elite population. As quality in public schools decline or the perception of it remains low, more families are likely to enroll their children in private schools. The poor and marginalized in society however may lose out, as competition drives costs beyond affordable levels leading to quality schooling for those who can afford it. It is important that factors which motivate demand for private schools, especially in poor areas are properly understood.

While private provision might address some access issues in urban and peri-urban areas, other forms of provision might be more appropriate for other more deprived areas of Ghana, where access issues are often complex, and require context-specific solutions. In the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) the government states it will support over 100,000 children to access alternative forms of education in deprived rural areas (Government of Ghana, 2002, in CARE International, 2003:i). Some examples of the types of non state provision available in Ghana will be discussed in more detail below: the School for Life; the Shepherd School Programme and the School Feeder Programme.

The School for Life (SFL) provides access to education for out-of-school children in northern Ghana. Its model provides good quality intensive ‘basic education’ in just 9 months and then attempts to mainstream graduates into state schools. The programme covered about 25% of communities (there are 767 communities in total) in 30 districts from 1995 to 2001. The programme is still on-going, but its long-term future is uncertain. Table 25 indicates the successes the SFL programme has had in enrolling out-of-school children, supporting them to graduation and facilitating their transition to state school.

In another study, Hartwell (2006) reported similar achievements for SFL. According to him of those who enter SFL, more than 91 percent complete the nine month programme which is the equivalent of 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of primary, and 66 percent overall and 68 percent of girls continued into the fourth grade of public school. According to Hartwell (2006:2) ‘much of the retention is credited to the SFL’s short duration of only nine months’.

**Table 25: Data on SFL learners (1995-2001) based on 30 districts**

	Male	Female	Total
Initial enrolment in SFL	21,346	14,698	36,044
Graduated from SFL	19,778	13,344	33,122
Dropped out of SFL	1,345	1,805	3,150
Transition to state schools	12,996	9,094	22,090

(Source: CARE International, 2003)

The Shepherd School Programme (SSP) is a non-formal basic education programme implemented in a number of pastoral communities in northern Ghana and funded by ActionAid. The objectives of the SSP are to: provide basic education to children from these isolated communities who are marginalized educationally; provide an opportunity for children to link into the formal school system; enable children to return to the community with basic literacy and numeracy skills. The programme aims to provide education which is locally appropriate, cost effective, and accessible to disadvantaged children (Action Aid, 2000 in Mfum-Mensah, 2003). There are many overlaps with the formal schooling system (e.g. curriculum, testing), but areas of difference, such as flexible school schedules and timings; facilitators rather than teachers are used; local communities manage and oversee SSP provision; and the use of local language in early years provision (Mfum-Mensah, 2003). SSP has been discontinued and raise questions about how sustainable such programmes are especially if they are not factored as part of a funded national strategic plan to improve access.

Mfum-Mensah (2003) carried out research on stakeholders’ perceptions of the impact of the SSP. Qualitative data was collected from interviews, observations and school documents. Interview data suggests that the SSP had a positive impact on educational access. Mfum-Mensah (2003) described how, ‘the programme is viewed as a ‘second chance’ education for children in these communities who either never had any opportunity to attend school, or dropped out of the public school system’. He also suggested parents indicated that because they felt their pastoral and farming vocations endangered, there was a need to encourage children to enrol in SSP in order to acquire employable skills. Before SSP in these communities’ educational access had been more problematic, particularly in terms of distances of educational providers. According to Mfum-Mensah (2003) during the interviews, most stakeholders claimed that getting children from these communities to enrol, attend and stay in the SSP was a practical demonstration of its positive impact. It was also thought to foster strong community-school relationships. Mfum-Mensah (2003) does provide one caveat, which is the practice of parents pulling students out of classes to perform duties at home.

The Rural Education Volunteer Programme (REV), initiated by ActionAid Ghana started in 2000, in various communities in the Upper West Region of Ghana. There

are now 250 Rural Education Volunteers. A significant emphasis is placed on recruiting female REVs in order to enhance female access to schooling. Little evidence is available on its impact on access.

The School Feeder Programme is another initiative which has targeted out-of-school children in the north of Ghana. According to the CARE International (2003) report, this programme emerged from community requests in 2000/2001 for schools in the Sissala District and the district assembly realized it could not build full (primary 1 to 6) schools in each of the communities. Before the introduction of this programme children in about a fifth of the communities had to walk more than 5 kilometres to reach the nearest school. Within a year, 453 children (grades 1 & 2) from seven communities involved in the programme were able to access public basic schools after attending the feeder schools. Having said this, the study reported high drop outs in grades one and two, possibly a result of migration practices of nomadic or semi-nomadic households (CARE International, 2003:43). So, while the School Feeder Programme had some positive results, it didn't succeed in providing sustainable access to all its children.

NGOs and other civil society organisations are seen to be more-effective implementers of programmes to provide context-specific access solutions because of their ability to be flexible in responding to complex situations. Research by CARE International (2003) indicates the need for these types of programmes to be learner-driven and learner-focused; flexible and culturally appropriate and skills oriented/competency-based. The examples of programmes provided indicate some increased access for children; targeted solutions for girls' access; support in gaining entry into mainstream schooling; increased community involvement in (and possibly demand for) education in deprived rural contexts. Yet more systematic research would be useful.

### **5.3 Summary**

This chapter has described a range of interlocking supply and demand factors which influence access to schooling in Ghana. The factors work in context-specific ways, interacting with each other and external influences, to ensure that each access situation in Ghana is distinctive to itself.

- A child living in the rural north is more likely to have less access than if that child lived in the urban or the south.
- Generally, access in the rural north is of much lower quality than in the urban south;
- Girls' access to education in northern and rural areas is less than in southern, urban and peri-urban areas.
- In contexts where poverty is high, girls often leave school to migrate out of communities or remain within households, to work.
- As children grow older and their labour market potential increases, children are more likely to drop out of school.
- Late access (and therefore probable early withdrawal) is influenced by a child's health in their early years, with undernourished and stunted children likely to start school later.
- A key determinant in access-related exclusions in Ghana seems to be poverty.



The work of CREATE will try to understand these exclusions further, providing informed suggestions as to how access can be improved for children not currently gaining meaningful and sustained access to schooling.

## **6. Reconceptualising Access: New Agendas for Policy and Research**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This section reviews some of the basic assumptions behind access policies and proposes an expanded agenda for research and policies to reach children mainly in zones 1 and 3. The section begins with a discussion of the interpretation and implications of basic education as a right. From this key issues that raise new questions about access are presented.

### **6.2 Basic Education as a Right**

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana contains extensive provision relating to education. Article 25 of the Constitution provides for a right to education and stipulates that:

- (a) Basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all;
- (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education;
- (c) Education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education;
- (d) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by progressive introduction of free education;
- (e) Functional literacy shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible;
- (f) The development of a system of schools with adequate facilities at all levels shall be actively pursued.

Basic education is therefore one of many rights in education that the constitution aims to support and provide. A Children's Act (Act 560), passed in 1998, implements the main provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Ghana. It states that 'no person shall deprive a child of access to education, immunisation, adequate diet, clothing, shelter, medical attention or any other thing required for his/her development'. However, the Act stops short of guaranteeing a right to education from the state, despite the constitutional guarantee for this right. Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II), shifts emphasis away from simply achieving poverty reduction, towards accelerating economic growth first by improving access and quality of basic education provision. Whereas GPRS I set targets for improving and achieving a six-year basic education for all children up to 12 years, GPRS II proposed eventually making school attendance obligatory for all children age 4 to 15. This reflects the extension of the meaning of basic education as expressed in the government White Paper on education reforms (see GOG, 2004).

There are a number of issues raised by these acts and declarations on basic education provision in Ghana which need careful evaluation. The following are worth noting:

Extending the definition of basic education from 9 to 11 years places enormous responsibilities (financial, logistical and manpower) on the state. The main argument

for including 2 years of kindergarten is to improve chances of children enrolling in primary education. International evidence suggests that middle class urban children have better access to early childhood education e.g. kindergarten than children from poor rural backgrounds (UNESCO 2007). Ensuring that all children have equal access to 2 year kindergarten education has the potential to ensure access and completion of basic education. It is therefore a means to expand access and not necessarily a fundamental function of 'basic education'. CREATE research in Ghana will test this assumption that access to kindergarten education improves access to primary education and beyond.

Access to basic education is also associated with preparation for life long learning. This is usually interpreted as providing through basic education fundamental 'knowledge and skills' for use in further contexts of education. By implication, access is meaningless if children complete the full cycle without achieving minimum learning outcomes (i.e. are functionally literate and numerate). Thus, a rights based education has meaning if it can guarantee that children who attend school can expect to receive quality functional education. In addition, there should be guaranteed routes back into basic education for those who drop-out for reasons out of their control. Therefore, it is the school system that needs adjusting to meet the needs of all children irrespective of their social and economic circumstances. Often NGO basic education initiatives are flexible and more adaptable to the local situations and context of poor communities, than state systems (Akyeampong, 2004).

Some of the issues that arise out of the evaluation of basic education as a right, and require the attention of education policy makers and researchers are as follows:

- There appears to be some disconnection between national policies to promote access and the local realities of household existence. Basic education as a right may have little meaning and value if the quality of that education is poor. Pryor and Ampiah (2003) found in their study of education in a rural village in Ghana that many parents questioned the returns to education for children who do not leave the village and enter post-basic education. For some, unless there is a real possibility of children progressing beyond basic education or acquiring basic skills and knowledge which they find adds some value to their lives, investing in basic education becomes an unattractive proposition. If the possibility is unlikely, then demand will be low and basic education as a right will have little meaning.
- For basic education as a right to be meaningful, its provision has to be capable of adapting to the circumstances of all families, especially households in areas of extreme conditions (i.e. socio-economic), which requires special measures. How does a rural community respond to non-performing public schools? More affluent families dissatisfied with the quality of public basic education may simply enroll their children in private education. But poor and deprived members of society lack this economic capital to choose what school their children have access to.

### **6.3 Understanding Access in the Ghanaian Context**

Education reforms from 1987 have achieved a lot but the apparent lack of capacity to achieve quantity and quality are bringing to the fore the need to re-examine some of

the assumptions which have driven basic education reforms over the last two decades. A supply driven approach appears to have reached its limits - construction of new school buildings ensured that a lot more children of school-going age enrolled. However, the apparently high number of out of school children suggests that new approaches and policies are required.

Where there is demand for education the tendency is for parents to do whatever it takes to enroll and pay whatever fees and levies schools demand through PTAs and other school-community compacts. In poor communities, these fees would deter parents. Capitation linked to fee-free provision provides the opportunity for poor families to send their children to school without threats of being sent home to collect school fees. But this is only part of the story. Other factors compete to deny access. To have real effect, policies on access must be judged by the extent to which they are pro-poor i.e. address constraints affecting particularly the poor in society.

The Ghanaian school-going age population is now divided into children whose parents are relatively well-off and do not require subsidized education, and the majority who attend public schools where tuition is free and school levies are minimal. The implications of this divide for quality education are now well known.

Social returns to investment into basic education suggest that the problem of access is not to be construed simply as a choice facing parents. The burden needs to be shared by society in general. It is important that the brunt of the responsibility shifts from national to district level, and even further, to local community level. If this were to happen, then it will have implications for how enrolment targets are set and how they are monitored. This will also mean that target setting and getting must be bottom-up, where local education authorities, schools, communities and parents work together to provide access to quality basic education.

Non state providers of basic education play a key role in reaching underserved populations as has been illustrated by the example of the SFL (see Section 5). It is therefore important that the responsibility for ensuring that all children have access to good quality basic education is shared between state and non-state providers, as some NGO providers are able to adapt their programmes to the needs of marginalized groups, better than the state. However, in order not to balkanize the efforts to expand access and reinforce regional disparities, it is important that non state providers complement the effort of government by working within a common national strategic framework to expand access for all children. Clear policy stipulations on the partnership relationship between public and non-state providers of basic education will be required if this is to be achieved. As yet, this has not been dealt with adequately in Ghanaian education policy on basic and secondary education.

Making basic education free of direct costs to parents, and compulsory, is only one half of the battle won. Other strategies are needed to promote demand. Besides, it is important to establish if basic education even under the capitation scheme is really free. CREATE studies in Ghana will provide some insights into this.

Access to basic education in Ghana has usually been approached from a supply side angle. This approach, however, can only meet the needs of those who have at least a minimum level of social and economic capital to access education. There remains a

group unlikely to benefit from supply-driven access initiatives. Households in extreme poverty may see children as economic assets expected to contribute to meet their survival needs, and coupled with poor quality provision, may see no benefit in sending children to school (see Pryor & Ampiah, 2003). As was discussed in Section 3 increasingly rural families are beginning to question the relevance of basic education. Pryor and Ampiah's (2003) study revealed that the adult populations in some poor rural communities have a more sophisticated understanding of the value of education than is often recognized. Key to that understanding is what they perceive to be the quality of education on offer. Some find public schools not of sufficient good quality to "warrant investment of time, energy and economic resources" (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003:xi). There is the need to find ways in which local communities can express a real stake in the provision of basic education. Notions that basic education is a means out of poverty would have little appeal if access does not extend beyond numbers to the quality of provision: it has to provide a real chance to successfully complete basic education at levels that assure sustained literacy and numeracy.

Policies intended to expand access and completion of basic education need to provide the kind of non-pecuniary incentives that are likely to make the prospect of basic education attractive. Quality of provision (i.e. teacher supply, school management, teaching and learning resources) and meaningful access (i.e. regular attendance, improved learning achievement), are key to the proposition that basic education is worth investment by all members of society, irrespective of location and welfare status.

## **7. Access to Basic Education in Ghana: CREATE Research Agenda**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The analysis in this report has shown that many factors determine poor or non-attendance of children to school. For example, migrant families and dispersed settlers often have difficulty accessing state schools because of the nature of their livelihood and distances to school. Both could become major disincentives for enrolling in school or attending regularly. Direct and indirect costs of sending children to school can also become a barrier to access. Not much is known about where drop outs end up or the proportion who return and the challenges they face reintegrating into school. We also know little about attendance patterns which lead to drop out and the early warning signs leading to permanent drop out.

What we know is that lack of access is concentrated mostly among poor rural areas, especially in Northern Ghana, as well as among densely populated urban poor. About 39 percent of the 138 districts in Ghana are classified as educationally deprived. This means areas with a high incidence of poverty and where access to good quality basic education is particularly acute. There are also pockets of population groups for whom sending a child to school is a difficult choice because of the consequences this has on their economic survival. There are others, including a few poor, who feel private schooling offers the best chance to post-basic education and a brighter future. Whatever challenges families face in deciding whether to send their child to school, state or private, the decision reflects investment choices as well as what they believe are the returns. Thus, access to basic education is simply not a pure supply issue, but is increasingly becoming an issue of demand, or at least a mixture of both supply and demand.

This analytic review has pointed out the following initiatives to improve access to basic education.

- Compulsory and free pre-school (kindergarten) education as key to improving access to primary and lower secondary education. The recommendation is to make pre-school a part of the definition of ‘free’ basic education. But, we do not find strong evidence that ‘free’ access to pre-school actually improves the chances of children staying on in school to complete. And if it is delivered differentially with most access being provided to children in urban areas and from relatively wealthy households will it exacerbate existing inequalities? Much of the rhetoric about its contribution is down to extrapolations of anecdotal evidence based on what happens in the more affluent urban areas. We should be exploring what the real gains are since the costs are huge and will place additional strains on an already overstretched education budget. CREATE field research in Ghana will attempt to provide some answers.
- Alternative and complementary schooling programmes are recognized as an effective strategy for reaching children initially excluded from schooling (children in zone 1). The ‘School for Life’ (SFL) programme in Northern Ghana is viewed as a good model and may offer further insights into effective strategies for reaching excluded groups. What is not clear is whether it is expanding, and at what cost, and whether it can be institutionalized within the normal education

system and budget provision? Also, what is the future role of programmes such as the SFL in national basic education reform strategies? How should diversity of provision be managed and funded to achieve the ultimate goal of providing basic education for all Ghanaian children, irrespective of socio-economic background and disability status?

- The introduction of capitation grants to schools is seen as one important strategy for improving access. The question that it raises is whether children are enrolling because of the direct funding to schools through the capitation grant scheme, and also whether those who enroll stay on to complete successfully basic education? Who stays or who doesn't and why? Similarly, school feeding has been introduced to boost enrolment and improve attendance. What do we know about its impact and sustainability? These are some of the issues that CREATE work in Ghana hopes to pursue and provide some insights into.

Other topical issues that emerge from this analytic review for further study include the following:

- The role of community (including parents)-school-local government relationships in improving access to basic education.
- School and teacher management effects on access. How are teachers' attitudes and actions affecting attendance and completion? What school level practices and teacher characteristics have a positive or negative impact on access?
- Issues about disability and access – how much of non-attendance is due to disability? What support and training do teachers get to help minimally disable children participate meaningfully in education? What cultural practices and values make access for the disable child difficult?

The Ghana CREATE research will have two major strands:

- A. Community and School Studies (ComSS)** - The ComSS will take the form of community/school level empirical enquiries into meaningful access for the sub populations of interest. These populations fall into four different zones of exclusion as outlined in the conceptual framework for researching access (see Appendix 1). An important aspect of the ComSS will be the longitudinal studies which will provide on a timeline, patterns of enrolment, attendance and processes leading to drop out.
- B. Baseline secondary analysis** – this will identify and make use of secondary data sets. It will attempt to quantitatively confirm or re-estimate the magnitudes of exclusion of different groups of children in order to subsequently trace how this changes over the period of CREATE. Using EMIS data sets secondary analysis will estimate the mean age at entry and at various grade levels. It will also estimate variations in age within grades. Also, mean and variance estimates will be analysed on the basis of how they vary by gender, ownership of the schools, i.e. public – private, size of school and location, i.e. district and urban-rural. The EMIS data sets will be used to examine patterns of enrolment at the various grades, i.e. from kindergarten to primary 6 and JSS 1. It will investigate the

relationship between school characteristics and enrolment patterns. The school characteristics of interest are school size, ratio of classrooms to classes and ownership. Finally it will investigate attrition patterns between grades and how these are related to school characteristics.

### **C. Thematic Studies**

Studies will be conducted into specific thematic areas that have been identified in the CAR as of significant interest to Ghana. Currently three areas have been identified:

#### **1. Capitation grant & school feeding policy and their impact on enrolment, attendance and completion**

- For children enrol as a result of capitation grants, what proportion stays on after a term, a year, to complete primary education? Why do some stay and others leave?
- What challenges have schools had in accessing and utilizing capitation grant funds to meet the demands of increased enrolments?
- What are possible scenarios for optimising capitation grants to improve enrolment, attendance and completion?
- Is school feeding a cost effective measure for expanding access and improving attendance?
- How do other direct subsidies compare with school feeding in terms of expanding access and improving attendance?

#### **2. Community, schools and local government relationships and responsibilities for promoting access**

- What school governance strategies have made a positive impact on access and participation?
- What system of teacher management operates in schools and to what extent is it responsible for the level of pupil and teacher attendance?
- How do teachers, headteachers, local education authorities and community leaders explain incidence of low enrolment and high dropout? What does each see as their roles and responsibilities in improving access and participation in basic education?
- What *local* systems of accountability and incentives are believed to have the most potential to improve enrolment and attendance?
- To what extent are local economic activities (e.g. fishing, farming etc) and cultural norms in rural and poor-urban communities' barriers to access? What possible responses from schools and communities can reduce the effect of local economic activities on school attendance?
- What circumstances and aspirations shape the decisions of low-income or rural families to either enrol their children in public or private basic schools?

#### **3. Managing the Expansion of Access to achieve Universal Basic Education**

- What are the financial and non-financial (e.g. teacher supply and demand, school infrastructure development, teacher management and efficiency etc) implications of managing the expansion of access to achieve UBE by 2015?
- How should expansion of access be managed in a pro-poor way?



As outlined in the ComSS discussion paper the community/schools study in Ghana will aim to achieve the following:

- **Illuminate the dynamics of exclusion in Zone 1** (lack of physical access, poor health and nutrition, disability, barriers to registration, reception year enrolment practices etc). In Ghana's case we shall explore the cultural and economic opportunity costs that make schooling unattractive to some population groups, and what the appropriate response should be. Household survey type of data will be important here.
- **Explore progress within Zone 2 through primary grades** (promotion, repetition, completion) with a view to identifying life histories of drop out and its precursors (irregular attendance, silent exclusion, selection exams which push out children etc). Here the aim will be twofold: (a) to develop a profile of progression patterns/drop out in sample schools, (b) to provide in-depth life history accounts of experiences in and out of school for selected pupils who are irregular attenders.
- **Establish status and opportunities in Zone 3** (drop outs and non-attenders who have attended school but did not stay on) to identify what drop outs are doing, what alternative access routes exist for them, The Ghana research will aim to study in-depth the lives of children who are at *risk* of dropping out. These children will be identified from work done to explore progress within zone 2.
- **Identify changing patterns of transition into lower secondary** (Zone 4), the consequences of these for primary completion, changing patterns related to equity, and the implications for expanded access to universal levels. Children who make it to the last stage of primary schooling in Ghana (primary 6) should in theory be able to enroll in junior secondary since there is no selection exam into lower secondary. First, we will investigate changing transition patterns into lower secondary for children in the selected school community study districts. Next, we will study the circumstances surrounding children who qualify but are unable to enroll into junior secondary. This may be extended to explore progress through and completion of JSS.

In each district where ComSS studies will be undertaken data collection will focus on generating information reflecting the issues as outlined above in the four zones of exclusion.

## 7.2 Overview of Key Research Questions for the ComSS

As well as tackling questions identified by the Ghana CAR, the following questions will be used to define the scope of research to be undertaken in Ghana.

- At community/school level what are current patterns of access and exclusion; who is currently excluded from basic education at different stages; and why are they excluded?
- How do family-community-school-local authority relationships interact to shape patterns of access? How have these been changing and why? What local level

initiatives have been taken to improve sustained meaningful access? What higher level initiatives (local government, national policy etc.) have had an impact and why?

- How do community/school patterns of access and exclusion fit with patterns in surrounding areas at district and zonal level? How typical or exceptional are the communities/schools chosen for research?<sup>22</sup> How do they interact with surrounding areas (especially important where there are migration/school transfer/school transition issues)?
- Where some sub-populations experience no access to basic education (i.e. children are never enrolled – Zone 1), what options are available to extend meaningful access and what is the evidence that these options (including alternative modes of delivery) are effective and sustainable? To what extent is non-participation a supply or demand side problem? Do enrolment practices (proof of residence/nationality, birth certificates, cultural preferences etc) create barriers to enrolment?
- How widespread is over (and under) age enrolment and what are its causes? To what extent is pre-school available and for whom? Does it have a subsequent independent impact on enrolment and completion? Where there are policies to extend access to pre-school age children how are these being implemented with what consequences?
- What processes result in crossing thresholds into exclusion for those who have entered some form of primary education (in the early years, in mid-primary grades, at the end of primary, in lower secondary) and what factors are determinants of exclusion? What options are available to improve progression, completion, and transition rates and reduce repetition and overage completion? How can drop before primary completion be reduced? What would facilitate re-entry of those excluded? To what extent is non-participation a supply or demand side problem at different grade levels? How can re-entry of drop-outs be enabled?
- What patterns of attendance exist (pupils and teachers) over time? Is poor attendance a precursor to drop out? What reasons result in irregular and chronic non-attendance and what mechanisms are there which might reduce the problem? How significant are health and nutrition related factors directly and indirectly in influencing participation?
- How is transition from primary to secondary school managed (and transitions within the primary cycle) and what effects do the processes have on meaningful access of different sub-populations through to the age of 15 years? What effects do primary/secondary transition rates have on primary completion? What options exist to improve transition rates into lower secondary grades in pro-poor ways?

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<sup>22</sup> It should be possible to use existing HH survey data for secondary analysis to establish patterns at different levels of analysis. In any case HH data and EMIS should be analysed for the specific communities chosen.

- To what extent are innovative and alternative forms of service delivery being used with positive effects at different levels including alternative and parallel systems? What role(s) are alternate service providers playing with what effects and with what capacity to develop, displace or complement orthodox public school provision?
- On current trends what levels of inclusion will be achieved by 2010 and 2015? Are these likely to result in near universal access and successful completion of primary schooling and participation through to the age of 15 years in lower secondary? If not what are the most promising strategies to achieve this result? What resources and other inputs would they require?
- What are the resource issues that are critical to improved access? Are direct and indirect costs of attendance a significant disincentive to the poorest? Where cash transfers exist what is their efficacy? What are the costs of interventions known to influence sustained enrolment e.g. school feeding?

All these questions will be addressed with a special emphasis on exclusions related to poverty, gender, and where relevant disability and other forms of child vulnerability and other culturally excluded groups.

### **7.3 Ghana: Key Research Areas and Questions**

From the Ghana Country Analytic Review (CAR) the following key research questions have been identified.

#### **Researching zone 1**

##### **1. Researching barriers to enrolment**

- What are the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Ghanaian children who never enrol in school? What is a good estimate of the size of this group?
- What conditions within the family or community acts as barriers to enrolment?
- What is the share of school-aged children in Ghana enrolled in alternative schools, special education schools, NGO non-profit schools etc.)?
- What routes exist for children in alternative basic schools to access public basic schools?
- What strategies have been used by alternative providers to enrol out of school children?
- To what extent can alternative schools provide sustainable access to basic education for children who unlikely to enrol in state basic schools?

#### **Researching Zones 2, 3 & 4**

##### **2. Tracking attendance and participation**

- What factors shape patterns of enrolment, attendance, drop out and completion of primary and junior secondary school?

- What school level characteristics correlate with high or low attendance e.g. is there a relationship between teacher attendance, characteristics of school management, school/classroom size, health status of children, and pupil enrolment and attendance?
- What individual<sup>23</sup> and household characteristics<sup>24</sup> correlate with high or low enrolment, attendance and progression in primary and JSS education?
- What factors account for lack of access to JSS after successful completion of primary?
- Does attendance at pre -school (kindergarten) improve attendance and completion of primary schooling?
- At what age and grade level are children in rural and urban areas most likely to enrol or drop out of school? What factors account for any age and gender differentiation in drop out?
- What happens to pupils who drop out from school in early, mid and late stages of primary education?
  - Where do they go, what do they do and how do they evaluate their school experiences?
  - What proportion of drop outs re-enter and at what grade level do most re-enter?
  - What challenges face drop outs who re-enrol?
  - What policies do schools have to reduce drop out and address the problem of poor attendance of pupils and teachers?
  - What conditions hinder other drop outs from re-enrolling?
- What are the *key determinants* of high and low enrolment in schools in rural and in urban poor areas?
- What whole school management practices increases the risk of low attendance and drop out?
- What professional characteristics and practices of teachers increase the risk of low enrolment, irregular attendance and low completion of primary school?

## 7.4 Sampling and Data Collection

Sampling will start with schools and move to households so as to map out the process and circumstances that shape patterns of enrolment and attendance. Three districts have been purposely selected for the field work. Six public schools will be selected from each district after consultation with district officials and using school level EMIS data. Where there is a private and/or a non profit alternative school, these will be included as additional sites for comparative analysis. To identify children in the exclusion zone category key local informants will be used. In addition household surveys will be used to identify children who fall into this category. Households of each child in the study schools will be surveyed at the beginning of the research. Children who appear at risk of dropping out or attend irregular will be singled out for

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<sup>23</sup> Individual characteristics include labour status of child, health status, gender, age, etc.

<sup>24</sup> Household characteristics include family income, education of father & mother, etc. – will use similar household characteristics as used by the Ghana DHS

further study. This may include further interviewing of the households they come from.

In each sample district a cohort sample will consist of the following: **Out of school children** (5-15years old) identified through the household survey and through key informants, and children in **KG, primary 1, 4, 6 and junior secondary 1**. A cohort will be tracked for three years, mainly gathering attendance data every month. Tracking will be used to identify those likely to lose access or fail to regain it (partly defined by gender, disability, and other forms of social exclusion. After three years a profile of attendance for primary 1-3, 4-6 and JSS 1-3 would emerge. We would also have a trajectory of children out of school over the three year period. Alongside the longitudinal survey, we will track the circumstances of households where children are attending irregularly and are at risk of dropping out, or have already dropped out.

Households with children enrolled in private or non-profit alternative basic schools will also be surveyed. These households will be identified either through the regular household survey which would be identified using pupils in the selected schools and also through key informants in the community. In places where non state providers are active baseline data on these schools will be collected as well as the households from which these pupils come from. Households of children who fall into zone 1, 2, & 3 will be interviewed periodically to build a comprehensive profile of family circumstances and its interaction with attendance, progression and completion.

Data will also be gathered from the district education offices. Here the main purpose is to gather information on roles and responsibilities, and investigate perceptions, attitudes and actions of local education authorities with respect to key access issues in the district.

Appendix 5 depicts the sampling logic for the Ghana studies.

## 7.5 Study Districts

Ghana can be divided into three main geographical belts: Northern, Middle and Southern. Districts were selected to represent each of these belts using the following criteria: (i) accessibility, (ii) type of district, (iii) a GER below 60 percent, and (iv) occupational activity that has potential to impact access. The districts selected are, **Savelugu-Nanton** (Northern Region), **Ahafo-Ano South** (Ashanti Region), and **Mfantseman** (Central Region).

The Northern Region is the third poorest region in Ghana and Savelugu-Nanton is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 40 deprived districts. It is however, easily accessible from Tamale the regional capital. The main occupational activity in the district is farming which could be one of the major causes of non-attendance at school. Even though the Ashanti Region is not considered a poor region, the Ahafo Ano South district is ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of the 40 deprived districts. It is a cocoa growing area and is easily accessible from Kumasi the Regional capital. Central region is ranked the 4<sup>th</sup> poorest region in Ghana. Although Mfantseman is not a deprived district it has characteristics that are relevant for a study of access to education. It has vibrant fishing communities, a major trading centre and is well-known as a place with relatively high child labour.

## 7.6 Conclusion

This review has analysed key evidence on access to basic education in Ghana and interrogated the implications of the issues for policy and further research. One key lesson to emerge is the importance of looking beyond national/regional gross and net enrolment data for better understanding of the factors that might be undermining meaningful access. What has also emerged from this review is the importance of ensuring that children start school at the appropriate age, especially in the first grade. There is a high risk of older children dropping out as they are pulled away into the informal labour market especially in contexts where poverty is high. If they start school late chances are that they will drop out.

Supply driven policies to improve access are also insufficient to enrol the hard to reach children who are out of school for economic or cultural reasons. In fact, it would appear that the introduction of fee-free basic education may not be enough for Ghana to achieve and sustain growth in enrolment and effective participation. Increased enrolments due to the introduction of capitation have clearly not been matched by adequate quality inputs into the school system to sustain the surge. What is required to sustain high enrolments is a mixture of policies targeted at specific issues or areas that are known to influence demand for education. When it comes to improving access there is no single magic bullet solution. Some of the evidence is pointing to the implication of costs at secondary education on demand for basic education. Households who perceive that secondary education is out of reach for their children who complete basic education, may show little interest in sending their children to school especially in contexts where poverty is high.

This review has also indicated that what is perhaps needed are a range of interlocking supply and demand policy driven initiatives to create meaningful access. For example, child health and nutrition are critical factors to access. The evidence points to the fact that (Section 5) late entry and early withdrawal is influenced by children's health in the early years (undernourished children are likely to start school late and more likely to drop out). Here is where targeted school feeding programmes in which children from poor rural areas are provided one school meal of high nutritional value can make a difference. Poverty is clearly at the root of poor participation in schooling in Ghana – in contexts where poverty is high we can expect to see a high incidence of child labour, migration out of communities etc. Girls' enrolment and attendance is especially affected by such conditions. So far, it is not clear how schools and their management systems are primed to address particular problems of access that relate to health, poverty and migration and yet what schools do in response to these challenges are central in the fight to reduce dropout and improve completion.

There are several gaps in our knowledge of what factors and conditions are producing the patterns and trends in enrolment and attendance that this review has revealed. In the next 2-3 years CREATE work in Ghana will hopefully produce insights that will lead to better understanding of sustainable initiatives that can make a positive difference in the next ten years and beyond. We hope that this analytic review has provided the basis for more research-based policies to improve access for all children in Ghana, especially the most vulnerable and socio-economically deprived children in the society. For such children meaningful access to basic education and possibly beyond constitutes a true hope out of poverty.

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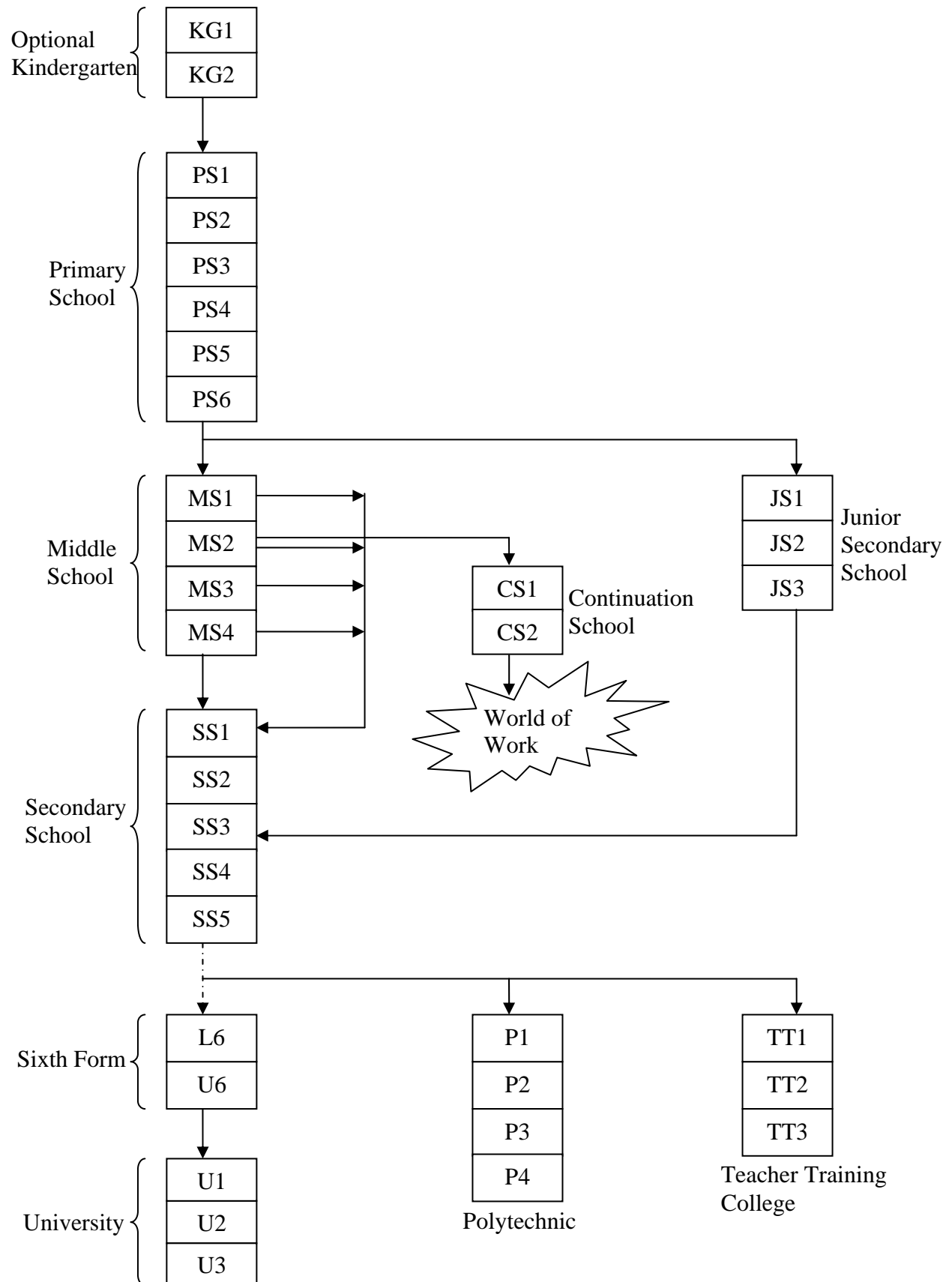
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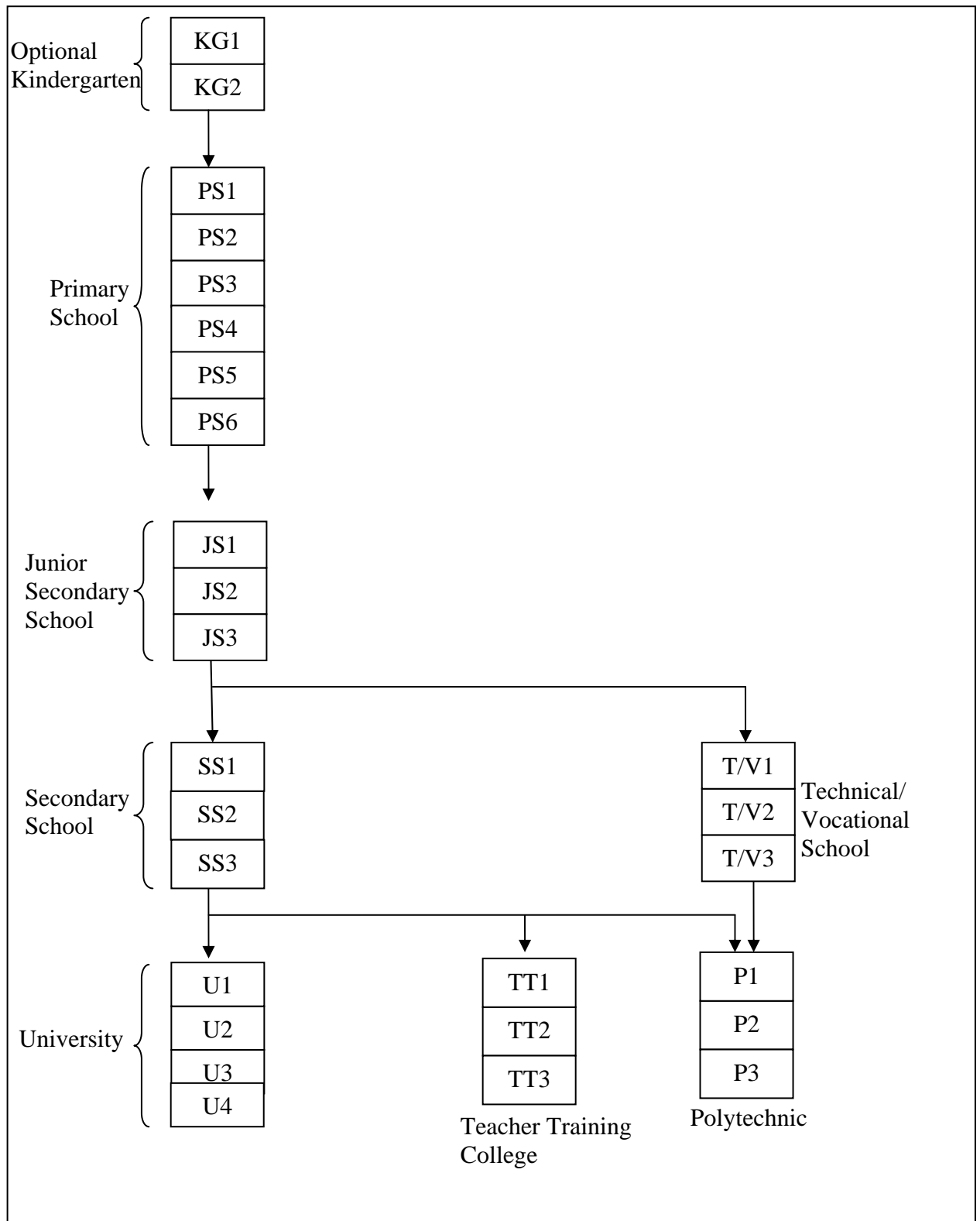
## Appendices

## Appendix 1 Ghana's Structure of Education (before 1987)



(Source: Adapted from Seidu, 1998)

## Appendix 2 Ghana's Structure of Education (After 1987)





### Appendix 3: New Structure of Education as in Government White Paper

YEARS	AGE		<b>TERTIARY EDUCATION</b>	<b>TERTIARY</b> University/Polytechnic/Technical University/Professional Institutes/College of Education/Teacher Education
4 3 2 1	18-19 17-18 16-17 15-16	Government's Commitment 11 years Compulsory Kindergarten and Basic Education For All (Age 4 to 15)	<b>Second Cycle Education</b>	<b>SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL</b> Specialisation in Grammar Technical/Agricultural/Vocational/Apprenticeship Programme
3 2 1	14-15 13-14 12-13			<b>JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL</b> General Curriculum for Entry into Grammar, Technical, Vocational, Agricultural Courses
6 5 4 3 2 1	11-12 10-11 9-10 8-9 7-8 6-7		<b>First Cycle Education</b>	<b>PRIMARY</b> Basic Literacy, Numeracy, Science and Social Studies
2 1	5-6 4-5			<b>KINDERGARTEN</b>

APPRENTICESHIP/  
SKILLS TRAINING

(Source: GoG, 2004, p. 52)

CREATE identifies six zones of exclusion<sup>25</sup>. Figure 1 presents a cross sectional model by grade of participation which locates those who are losing or have lost access to conventional education systems. It illustrates how typically enrolments decline steeply through the primary grades in low enrolment countries, and how those attending irregularly and achieving poorly fall into “at risk” zones. In this hypothetical model more than half of all children leave before completing primary school, and about half of the primary completers are selected into lower secondary school where attrition continues.

**CREATE**  
**Conceptual Model of**  
**Zones of Exclusion**

**% Participating**

**Grade**

**Zone 1**  
Children  
Never  
Enrolled

**Zone 2**  
Girl and Boy Drop Outs with  
Incomplete Primary Schooling  
below the Legal Age for Formal  
Employment

**Zone 3**  
Low Attendance  
and Achievement

**Zone 4**  
Primary Completers  
Excluded Secondary

**Zone 5**  
Drop Outs

**Zone 6**  
At Risk

**Secure Enrolment**

**Primary Grades**

**Lower Secondary Grades**

**Access**

**No Access**

**Unlikely to Enrol**

**Should be Enrolled**

**Grade 1**

**Grade 2**

**Grade 3**

**Grade 4**

**Grade 5**

**Grade 6**

**Grade 7**

**Grade 8**

**Grade 9**

**Grade 10**

**Zone 2** includes the great majority of children who are excluded *after* initial entry. Typically, drop out is greatest in the early grades, with a substantial subsequent push-

97

out at the transition to secondary school. Pre-cursors to drop out include repetition, low achievement, previous temporary withdrawals, low attendance, late enrolment, poor teaching, degraded facilities, very large classes, household poverty, child labour and poor health and nutrition (Boyle et al., 2002; Canagarajah and Nielsen, 1999; Fentiman, Hall and Bundy, 1999; Nokes et al, 1998). Those dropping out usually become permanently excluded with no pathway back to re-enter. The zone includes disproportionate numbers of girls, HIV/AIDS orphans, and others in vulnerable circumstances (Pridmore et al, 2005). It may be influenced by child labour practices (Ravallion and Wodon, 1999).

**Zone 3** includes those in school but at risk of dropping out. These children might be low-attenders, repeaters and low-achievers. Children who remain formally enrolled in school may be silently excluded if their attendance is sporadic, their achievement so low that they cannot follow the curriculum, or if they are discriminated against for socio-cultural reasons. Nutritional deficiencies and sickness can compound these problems (Partnership for Child Development, 1998). Too little is known of how the range of influential factors is changing as EFA evolves, how they result in decisions to enrol and attend at different grade/age levels, and how they have an impact on different key disadvantaged groups.

**Zone 4** contains those excluded from lower secondary school as a result of failing to be selected, being unable to afford costs, or dropping out before successful completion of primary. This exclusion is important for EFA since transition rates into secondary affect demand for primary schooling, primary teacher supply depends on secondary graduates, and gender equity at the secondary level is an MDG. Access to secondary schooling promotes the social mobility needed to give poor households more access to higher income employment.

**Zone 5** includes those children who have entered lower secondary school but who fail to progress to the end of the cycle. In most countries lower secondary is now considered part of basic education. Many who fail to complete the cycle are likely to be below the legal working-age if they are in the appropriate grade for their age. The reasons for drop out include poor performance, affordability, and loss of interest. Demand to remain in school may weaken as a result of high opportunity costs where work is available.

**Zone 6** contains lower secondary children at risk of drop out. As with Zone 3 some will be silently excluded though enrolled and at risk as a result of poor attendance and low achievement. Costs and affordability are also likely to be significant.

**Zone 0** refers to pre school participation. This is very poorly detailed though it is clear that in low enrolment countries large majorities experience little or no access to organised pre-school, and those that do are often enrolled in high cost private facilities. This almost certainly disadvantages this population in relation to those that do attend preschool and achieve a head start in basic learning. Several countries are developing policy to extend the reach of pre-schooling and provide public finance to support its development (e.g. Ghana and South Africa).

## Appendix 5: Sampling Frame for Researching Access to Basic Education in Ghana

**District Education Office**  
Researching roles,  
responsibilities & relations  
with schools & community

**Community and opinion leaders:**  
community characteristics, views  
about schooling, relations with  
schools, community/DEO interactions

### COMMUNITY

#### ZONE 1:

#### NEVER ENROLLED:

Life history of  
children never  
enrolled

**Household questionnaire**  
(families of children who  
have never enrolled)

#### ZONES 2, 3, 4: INCOMPLETE PRIMARY & EXCLUDED FROM SECONDARY

##### LONGITUDINAL DATA SCHOOL LEVEL

1. Data on school characteristics
2. Baseline:  
Classroom level (KG, P1, 4, 6, & JSS1)
  - School attendance records - Pattern of enrolment/ attendance/dropout/completion (*Repeated bi-monthly*)
  - School attendance records - Retrospective analysis of attendance (P6 – P1) – 3/5 years
3. Achievement records/BECE
4. Teachers – attendance records/interviews  
Headteacher Interview

**Household Survey  
HH of children in:**  
(a) KG, P1, 4, 6 & JSS1  
(b) Drop-out & Non attenders  
(c) In non-state schools

**Irregular  
attenders**  
Life story:  
home and  
schooling  
experiences

**Drop Out**  
Life story:  
home and  
schooling  
experiences

**Private  
Schools**  
Baseline  
Survey

**Alternative schools**  
Baseline:  
Attendance records  
Achievement  
Teacher attendance  
Headteacher interview

child subjects

*Northern Region – Northern Ghana*

**Savelugu-Nanton District EMIS Statistics (2004-2005)**

<u>Primary Enrolment Rates</u>				<u>JSS Enrolment Rates</u>			
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>		<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
<i>Popn(6-11yrs)</i>	18,501	9,551	8,950	<i>Popn(12-14yrs)</i>	5,334	3,084	2,250
<i>Tot. Enrol</i>	14,193	8,309	5,884	<i>Tot. Enrol</i>	3,199	2,237	962
<i>GER</i>	76.7%	87.0%	65.7%	<i>GER</i>	60.0%	72.5%	42.8%
<i>Enrol(6-11yrs)</i>	10,491	5,924	4,567	<i>Enrol(12-14yrs)</i>	920	682	238
<i>NER</i>	56.7%	62.0%	51.0%	<i>NER</i>	17.2%	22.1%	10.6%
<i>GAR</i> <sup>4</sup>	84.8%	90.0%	79.7%	<i>GAR</i>	73.4%	93.2%	47.4%
<i>NAR</i> <sup>5</sup>	31.4%	31.7%	31.1%	<i>NAR</i>	1.7%	1.9%	1.4%

2. Gross Enrolment Ratio

3. Net Enrolment Ratio

4. Gross Admission Ratio

5. Net Admission Ratio

**Ashanti Region - Middle Ghana**

**Ahafo-Ano South District EMIS Statistics (2004-2005)**

<u>Primary Enrolment Rates</u>				<u>JSS Enrolment Rates</u>			
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>		<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
<i>Popn(6-11yrs)</i>	26,134	13,922	12,212	<i>Popn(12-14yrs)</i>	9,658	5,175	4,483
<i>Tot. Enrol</i>	16,253	8,853	7,400	<i>Tot. Enrol</i>	4,452	2,541	1,911
<i>GER</i>	62.2%	63.6%	60.6%	<i>GER</i>	46.1%	49.1%	42.6%
<i>Enrol(6-11yrs)</i>	11,818	6,323	5,495	<i>Enrol(12-14yrs)</i>	1,938	1,051	887
<i>NER</i>	45.2%	45.4%	45.0%	<i>NER</i>	20.1%	20.3%	19.8%
<i>GAR</i> <sup>4</sup>	76.0%	75.2%	77.0%	<i>GAR</i>	49.1%	52.2%	45.7%
<i>NAR</i> <sup>5</sup>	20.8%	21.0%	20.5%	<i>NAR</i>	5.8%	6.6%	4.9%

2. Gross Enrolment Ratio

3. Net Enrolment Ratio

4. Gross Admission Ratio

5. Net Admission Ratio

<i>Popn(0-11yrs)</i>	30,548	15,336	15,212	<i>Popn(12-14yrs)</i>	12,301	6,263	6,038
<i>Tot. Enrol</i>	27,005	13,898	13,107	<i>Tot. Enrol</i>	9,548	4,846	4,702
<i>GER</i>	88.4%	90.6%	86.2%	<i>GER</i>	77.6%	77.4%	77.9%
<i>Enrol(6-11yrs)</i>	18,770	9,401	9,369	<i>Enrol(12-14yrs)</i>	4,257	2,005	2,252
<i>NER</i>	61.4%	61.3%	61.6%	<i>NER</i>	34.6%	32.0%	37.3%
<i>GAR</i> <sup>4</sup>	91.9%	95.6%	88.3%	<i>GAR</i>	80.7%	80.9%	80.6%
<i>NAR</i> <sup>5</sup>	20.9%	21.8%	19.9%	<i>NAR</i>	11.9%	11.3%	12.6%

2. Gross Enrolment Ratio

3. Net Enrolment Ratio

4. Gross Admission Ratio

5. Net Admission Ratio

### Sampling Frame

Districts	No. Primary: JSS (Public)	No. Primary: JSS (Private)	No. Schools selected (Public) <sup>4</sup>	Approx No. pupils track <sup>1</sup> (enrolment)	Number of teachers to interview	Other schools (private/alternative non profit) <sup>3</sup>	Approx number of households to survey <sup>2</sup>
<b>Northern Ghana</b> Savelugu-Nanton	76:16	3/0	6-8	140 6=840	x 24-32	3	280
<b>Middle Ghana</b> Ahafo-Ano South	88:41	21/4	6-8	140 6=840	x 24-32	3	280
<b>Southern Ghana</b> Mfantseman	98:70	50/22	6-8	140 6=840	x 24-32	3	280
<b>Total</b>			18 - 24	2520	72-96		<b>840</b>

<sup>1</sup>Based on a approx of 35 pupils in a class x 4 classes (KG, P1, 4, 6, & JSS1)

<sup>2</sup>Based on a sample of a third the number of pupils whose enrolment will be tracked. HH survey principles would be adhered to maximize quality of information e.g. interviewing head of HH, gender sensitivity, weighting where necessary etc. Protocols will be developed to guide the HHS.

<sup>3</sup> Three non-state schools will be purposely selected for comparison with the state schools. This number could be higher depending on the characteristics of schools in the area e.g. in Northern Ghana we could have a higher number due to interest in School for Life schools

<sup>4</sup>Schools are purposely selected after visits to districts

**Note:** All schools selected should have a corresponding JSS attached or have a JSS that is within reach of all the other primary schools



Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access, Transitions & Equity  
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### Report Summary:

The analysis of access to education in Ghana builds on the Ministry of Education Sector Performance Report and the World Bank sector studies. Though access has improved it remains uneven and has not grown as fast enough to reach universal levels of participation in primary school and JSS by 2015. More needs to be understood about the reasons for stalled growth. Repetition and drop out remain significant at the beginning and end of primary. Overage entry appears stubbornly resistant to attempts to enroll all children, especially girls, at the age of six. Regional variations in access and participation are such that as many as 40% of school age children are not enrolled in some parts of the country, especially in the North. And levels of achievement suggest that further expansion risks increasing the numbers who learn little of what is required to assure sustained literacy and numeracy. This analysis identifies gaps in current research and maps out a programme of empirical enquiry.

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